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## MYTHICAL AND COSMOLOGICAL STRUCTURE IN THE HOMERIC HYMN TO DEMETER

LARRY J. ALDERINK

One of the earliest and most important literary testimonia to the Eleusinian mysteries is the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. My analysis assumes that this myth is the product of an Eleusinian circle and that it reveals, if not the action, the aims and intentions of participation in the mystery rites which were celebrated from approximately the 12th century B.C.E. to the 4th century C.E. in Eleusis, not far from Athens.<sup>1</sup> The myth was one mode through which the mystery came to expression; it articulates the aims and intentions of participation in the mystery celebration. My concern in this paper is to analyze the Eleusinian myth in order to extract its cosmological framework and its conception of *post-mortem* existence.<sup>2</sup> First, I will summarize the myth, and then present an analysis which concentrates on its episodic character and the network of its structural relations.

1. The rape of Persephone (1-39). While playing in a meadow away from the protective care of Demeter, Persephone reached for a beautiful narcissus, which Zeus had caused miraculously to grow. As she attempted to fondle the flower, the earth yawned and Plouton rapt away Persephone to the underground realm (Hades) where he ruled as lord. Persephone called out for Zeus' help but he, her father, remained aloof; only Helios and Hekate heard her pleas. Persephone called to her mother, Demeter, who heard but could not locate Persephone.

2. The distress of Demeter (40-89). For nine days Demeter futilely searched for Persephone, without the aid of either god (immortal) or human (mortal). On the morning of the tenth day, Hekate journeyed with Demeter to Helios, who told the story: Zeus had given Persephone to Plouton, and the new wife and husband were dwelling in Hades. Helios' advice was that Demeter should not grieve over the loss of her daughter, who now had a good

husband whose kingdom was one-third of the cosmos and who was master of many (i.e., all who die).

3. Demeter at Eleusis, a goddess among humans (90-299). Demeter directed her anger toward Zeus; she left Olympus and travelled in disguise to Eleusis and was met at the well by the daughters of King Keleus, whom she told she had been abducted from Crete to be sold in Greece. The daughters suggested that Demeter become nurse for Demophoön, their late-born brother; their mother, Metaneira, agreed. When Demeter met Metaneira, the goddess was not recognized although her dignity and grace were apparent; Demeter's disguise was convincing. The child grew like an immortal because Demeter anointed him with ambrosia. At night she intended to thrust him into the fire to put him beyond the power of age and death, but in fear Metaneira interrupted the act. In anger and sorrow, Demeter rebuked Metaneira's unknowing act: "I would have made your dear son deathless...and bestowed on him everlasting honor, but now he can in no way escape death and the fates." Yet because "he lay upon my knees and slept in my arms," he would always have honor. Demeter also showed the Eleusinians her true nature: her beauty, fragrance, golden hair, and her divinity. A bright light filled the entire house. Demeter demanded a temple where she might be worshipped. King Keleus and his people immediately built her a temple.

4. Demeter in her temple and the concession of Zeus (300-439). When the temple was complete, Demeter secluded herself in it, away from gods and humans. She also prevented the earth from permitting seed to sprout; there was a year's famine. Two imminent consequences precipitated a crisis. First, humans were without food and would soon die. Second, gods soon would be bereft of offering, sacrifice, and worship. Both gods and humans would suffer deprivation of what they most desired and needed. Zeus sought to avert the impending disaster. He sent Iris to encourage Demeter to recognize his wisdom in preserving the cosmos; Demeter remained obdurate. Next, he sent all the gods with offers of gifts and rights; Demeter refused to be placated. Finally, Zeus dispatched Hermes to Hades with the message that Demeter will deny food to humans and honor to the gods unless Persephone be returned to her mother. The cosmic order was threatened. Hermes journeyed to Plouton,

who reluctantly acquiesced. At a banquet, prior to Persephone's return to Demeter, he reminded her of his splendid husbandly qualities, gave her a pomegranate seed to eat and bade her farewell. Gladly Persephone entered Hermes' chariot and was reunited with her mother in the temple at Eleusis. The reunion of mother and daughter was joyous, although Demeter informed Persephone that her eating the pomegranate meant that she would have to spend a third of the year in Hades and each spring she would return to the upper world of gods and humans. Rhea (mother of Zeus) invited Demeter to return to Olympus. Demeter made the earth fertile, instructed the Eleusinians in the performance of her rites and secret worship, and returned to Olympus:

But when the bright goddess had taught them all, they went to Olympus to the gathering of the other gods. And there they dwell beside Zeus who delights in thunder, awful and reverend goddesses. Right blessed is he among men whom they freely love: soon do they send Plouton as guest to his great house, Plouton who gives wealth to mortal men (483-89).

For those who participate in the rites:

Happy is he among men upon earth who has seen these mysteries; but he who is uninitiate and who has no part in them, never has lot of like good things once he is dead, down in the darkness and gloom (480-82).

From this recapitulation of the events of the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* it is clear that there are implicit themes which require elaboration and tensions or conflicts which require analysis. The myth has been analyzed in a variety of ways, and one can discover varying kinds of information in the myth, depending on the methods one employs and the perspective one adopts. Scholars have often been concerned to select or isolate certain episodes for comparison with other data in order to obtain a more complete image of the ritual practices of the mysteries. Other scholars have sought to identify the central thrust of the myth, e.g., the reunion of Demeter and Persephone, and then to correlate this thrust with agricultural practices.

It is possible, however, to emphasize other considerations. It is important to discuss particular episodes—but also productive to observe the concatenations, both sequential and structural, between episodes. It is equally important to specify the central motif of a myth—but it is also valuable to detect connections within or in-

ternal to the framework established by the terms of the myth. My aim is to view the myth as a whole to detect relation of its component parts as they provide information about the cosmological framework of the myth.

In the myth there is a delicate and fragile balance between a complex set of relationships. Four episodic moments are primary. At first, only gods are involved, then gods and humans interact, next gods and humans interact but in a way different from the preceding stage, and finally the scene again shifts to divine relationships. Two structural dimensions invite attention. First, the conclusion of the myth indicates a carefully balanced relationship between gods and humans. Thus, an important factor in the myth is the care with which the myth observes two different levels of beings and the refusal to confuse two diverse spheres, that of the gods and that of humans. Second, within the two diverse spheres, there is a division of another sort, for the first set of divine events consists of a conflict/resolution duality. The second set, that of divine-human events, consists of a disguise/revelation duality. In each of the dualities, from conflict to resolution and from disguise to revelation, an event of a particularly strong character is required to effect the transformation. In the first case, mediation is required to satisfy the demands of the various deities: Demeter's demands for her daughter, Plouton's desire for his wife, and Zeus' responsibility for holding the cosmos intact. In the second case, the event consists of a revelation in which Demeter's appearance, i.e., her "reality," undergoes the change from a nurse to a goddess (both of which she is, of course).

In the Eleusinian myth, the conflict between the chief deities is intense, for they have strong and sharply defined characters. Zeus was responsible for all relationships, divine as well as human, and consequently he could abrogate his duties only at the expense of permitting the cosmos to degenerate into chaos; with no food, humans die and gods receive no sacrifice and the earth becomes waste. Demeter's power was that of a mother who would not lose her daughter even if chaos ensue. And Plouton was a husband who would not lose his wife, even if the requisite price were deceiving her and her mother. In order to satisfy all the parties who have a stake in the outcome after the primal deed of the abduction of

Persephone and Demeter's anger, mediation is required. At the beginning of the myth, as the conflict between the gods was developing, only Hekate and Helios knew where Persephone had been taken; only Helios would provide Demeter with the information she wandered nine days to find.<sup>3</sup> Later, after Demeter hid herself in her temple and issued her intractable demands, Zeus sent Iris with the request that Demeter return to Olympus.<sup>4</sup> Demeter, of course, refused. Then Zeus sent all the gods, for clearly they all had a stake in the impending doom: "they came, one after the other, and kept calling her, and offering her many very beautiful gifts and whatever rights she might be pleased to choose" (326-28). Finally, Hermes, especially skilled at carrying messages and familiar with all the regions inhabited by men in life and death, left the house of Olympus to approach Hades and his bride in the "hidden places of the earth" (340). He persuaded Hades to relinquish part of his rights, and returned Persephone from their hall beneath the earth to her desolate mother in the temple at Eleusis.<sup>5</sup>

The resolution of conflict in the divine world was effected through the mediation of Hermes, and resulted in a redistribution of divine rights and privileges in which there was a reconstitution of the relationships that obtain between four important deities. In a sense, one could say that the chief deities of the Eleusinian cult were Demeter, Persephone, Plouton, and Zeus, insofar as he was the father of all gods and humans.<sup>6</sup> As Nilsson's analysis has shown, there are two sets of deities: on the one hand are Demeter and Persephone, mother and maid, and on the other are "the god" and "the goddess."<sup>7</sup> Both sets are portrayed and named on a fourth century relief.<sup>8</sup> In the myth, Demeter is the mother whereas Plouton is the husband—and Persephone is *both* daughter and wife.<sup>9</sup>

The particular resolution that was reached has primarily to do with the relationships between Demeter, Persephone, and Plouton. It is for her daughter that Demeter wandered and fasted, and because of her absence that Demeter required a dwelling place apart from her fellow deities. But she and Persephone were reunited, "with hearts at one" (434), cheering "each the other's soul and spirit" (435). Because he wanted to keep his wife, Plouton was untroubled by the absence of the crops and the anger of his

wife's mother. But in the end, he who rules over a third of the world yielded to the superior power and wisdom of Zeus, his brother: he "smiled grimly and obeyed the behest of Zeus" (367-68). Persephone was "caught in the middle." She and her mother were separated with crying and shrieks, but joyfully rejoined each other. She and her husband parted—he reluctant and she eager—with his promise: "I shall be no unsuited husband for you...and while you are here, you shall rule all that lives and moves" (263-66). The final unification indicates that all parties receive a portion (moron) appropriate to their level. Demeter mother makes "fruit spring up from the rich lands, so that the whole earth was laden with leaves and flowers" (470-73).<sup>10</sup> Plouton will have his wife in Hades for four months. Persephone will live with her mother for eight months, and with her husband four.<sup>11</sup> Humans can work the land with the assurance of Demeter's favor, and moreover, participate in the mystery rites which promise happiness after death (482).<sup>12</sup> Above all, what Zeus has declared shall be: "he has bowed his head in token" (466).

In one respect, the resolution of conflict in the divine world resembles the resolution of tension in the human sphere. For as Demophoön would be happy but remain mortal, so Persephone would be wife but remain daughter; for the one-third of the year she would rule those living in Hades, but for the two-thirds of the year she would live with her mother and the Olympians. Neither achieves completion, but each is fulfilled, and the cosmos remains intact; the crisis was resolved.

There is a difference, however, between the resolutions that emerge. The human sphere was clearly dependent on the realm of the gods: both human society and the fecund earth are grounded upon the power and benevolence of the gods. There is, however, reciprocity, for unless reverence and worship are given Demeter and Persephone, and unless the wisdom and power of Zeus are recognized, the gods are relegated to insignificance and the cosmos becomes chaotic.

Further, the unification that occurs in the divine world is more comprehensive than the coherence of the dependent human world, for the divine world includes the dimensions of time and space as well as life and death without being subject to those dimensions.

There is, we may say, a “system” of unification that operates at diverse levels. In terms of temporal succession, the year revolves but time is divided into rhythmically connected segments of planting and harvesting paralleled by the diverse sojourns of Persephone. On the other hand, the cosmic spheres are clearly demarcated yet interrelated and connected with chronology:

Zeus: father on Olympus (totality of cosmos)  
Demeter: mother of earth and seasons, but dwells on Olympus  
Persephone: daughter (on Olympus, eight months), wife (in Hades, four months)  
Plouton: brother of Zeus but ruler-husband in Hades.

Thus, the two dimensions of chronology and hierarchy are united; their coherence is a consequence of the mythical construction of the divine forces which impinge on human activity. As the abduction and subsequent events threaten humans with starvation and the gods with dishonor, it also becomes an event which the various episodes of myth transform into a *new* construction rather than merely a restoration of the old. Against the background of the contrasting needs of gods and men, the practices of mysteries and agriculture acquired their specific value at Eleusis and portray the manner in which their world was ordered. The children of Demeter and the relationships between the deities demonstrate the connections between the two rather diverse spheres of gods and humans after the threat of chaos is overcome by rearranging old relationships and thus constructing a new constellation. Zeus retains his role, for his wisdom is everlasting; yet he has made concessions to Demeter in that she is the recipient of worship and honor with respect to life at Eleusis. Plouton has a wife and hence Hades is no longer a realm of “man alone” but of “man and wife,” no longer a realm of “death alone” but of “blessedness-in-death.” Demeter and Persephone remain mother and daughter, yet Demeter’s power has increased and Persephone has become a wife. This means that a benevolent queen rules those living in Hades, a queen who, with her mother, is worthy of honor, gifts, and rites in the underworld.

Thus, an intricate and new balance has been established by the myth. First, the gods have overcome their conflict, second, gods and humans have come to recognize the dependence of humans on

the gods and the gods' duties toward humans; and third, gods and humans are linked through agriculture and the mystery rites. Yet the mystery does not inhere solely in the rites, for the network of relationships in which the rites were embedded is itself not self-evident or obvious. The mystery is located as much in the ability of the seed to be hidden and to be given, and in the ability of human beings to participate in another level—happiness—which the deities create. It is happiness given by agricultural endeavor and in addition a share or portion of “good things once he is dead,” just as he is “happy among men on earth” for having seen these mysteries (480-84). In the purview of the Eleusinian myth, happiness prior to death goes with happiness after death; it is the happiness which makes life *before* and *after* death into correlates.

We cannot, of course, conclude that the myth provides a ground for saying that participation in the rites liberates a divine part of the *mystes* or that participation divinizes the *mystes*.<sup>13</sup> But the myth does provide a ground for concluding that the mythic events which describe Persephone’s abduction and Demeter’s response effect a restructuring of the relationships that obtain among the gods. Demeter’s demands constitute an intervention in the world of humans. The consequence of her intervention is the transformation of agriculture from a natural process to a human activity surrounded by divine guarantees and conducted under the aegis of Demeter and Persephone’s power. Further, agricultural endeavor is related by the myth to participation in the rites Demeter initiated as a guarantee of the regularity of the seasons. The cosmic refractions are drawn into coherence by the focus on Demeter’s power over the food supply: the governing power on Olympus and the existence of humans on earth and in Hades are dependent on Demeter. Demeter’s centrality binds them to herself, and not only restores but restructures the governance and activity of the cosmos. Happiness in the *post-mortem* world was not viewed as a reward, nor yet isolated from activities in the *ante-mortem* world. Rather, Demeter offered *happiness* in the *post-mortem* world through worship of her in the mystery rites, and this happiness was her gift, as was the happiness provided by her gift of agriculture.

If the myth does effect such a transformation as I have attempted to portray in my analysis, we must ask *from* what and *to* what does

the transformation extend, and what are the terminal points of the change? And if this can be made clear, then we have reason to believe that the myth constitutes a form of knowledge in its own right, and as such is a valuable source of information for the mystery rites and the knowledge they imparted.<sup>14</sup>

The myth begins with an idyllic scene. Persephone was playing in the fields with other divine children, enjoying a “state of childhood bliss.” Demeter was the mother of Persephone, the daughter of Zeus. Plouton was only the lord of Hades. Zeus, however, sits “aloof, apart from the gods, in his temple where many pray, receiving sweet offerings from mortal men” (27-29). But by the end of the myth, all this is changed. How does this come about?

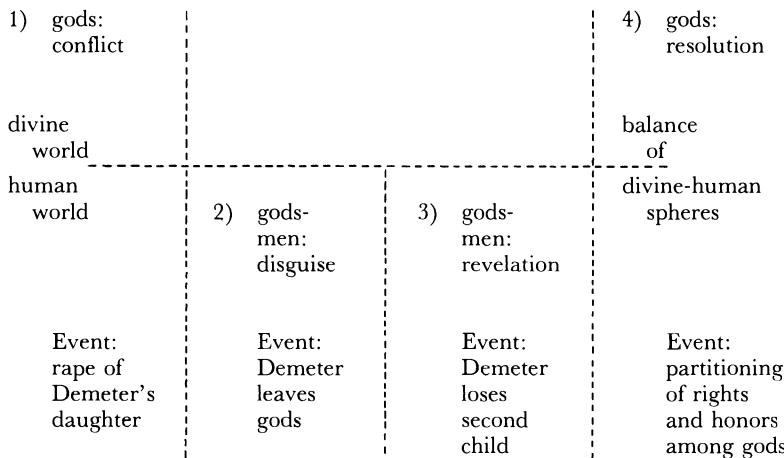
As we have noticed, the myth illuminates a fragile and delicate balance between a complex set of relationships. The scene of mythical activity shifts three times, and thus the events are divided into four clearly marked segments. The events occur in two spheres—the one consisting of only gods and the other consisting of gods and humans and transpire in a connected series of episodes.

There is, however, a further division. The first set of events, those in which only gods are present, consist of a conflict—resolution duality: the beginning of the myth exhibits idyllic peacefulness, but the abduction of Persephone threatened the well-being and existence of the Olympians, and finally there is a resolution with redistributed powers and honors. The second set of events, those in which gods and humans interact, consists of a disguise—revelation duality: humans mistook Demeter for a dishevelled woman refugee but later find that she is the power upon whom their grain and cultivation depend.

In each of these dualities, from conflict to resolution and from disguise to revelation, a decisive event brought about the transformation. In the first case, mediation is required to satisfy the demands of the various deities: Demeter’s demands for her daughter, Plouton’s desire for his wife, and Zeus’ responsibility for holding the cosmos intact. In the second case, the mediating event consists of Demeter’s loss of her “second” and “adopted” child, Demophoön. The fact that Demophoön was “adopted” not only emphasizes her intimacy with human beings but also the fun-

damental cleavage between a goddess who has established relations with humans and upon whom life depends, and humans who will be able to achieve happiness and bliss, but not the immortality which belongs to Demeter.

From our analysis of the myth and its summary, we may portray its structure and development of logic diagrammatically:



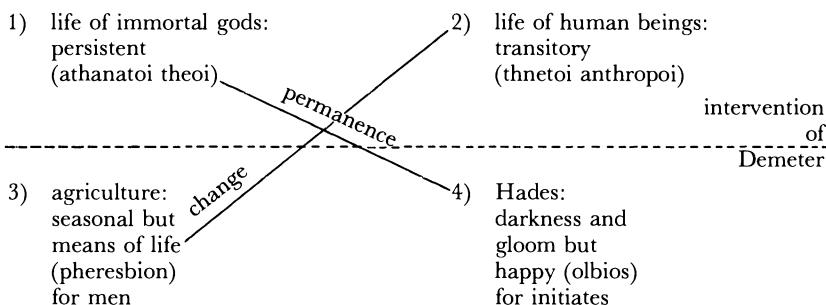
It is important to realize, furthermore, that the episodic character of the myth is not autonomous, just as the division into two clearly distinguished worlds of gods and humans is not independent. Rather, underlying the events of the myth are tensions which explain the reasons for which the events could occur; without the tensions, the myth is but another interesting item in the repertoire of Greek mythology which enables us to acquire some knowledge of Greek gods but provides no information concerning their relationships. In three significant ways the myth clarifies the world-structure.

First, early in the myth, there is the assertion that there are two categories of beings which represent two disparate and incommensurate levels of existence along a time scale: there are beings subject to time and hence death (*thnetoi anthropoi*), and there are beings not subject to time and hence deathless (*athanatoi theoi*). Later in the myth a further condition becomes evident, *viz.*, that the earth herself is the source of the means of life for humans (food) and for

gods (sacrifice and worship). The earth, consequently, is the referent of divine care and the scene of human activity. Zeus in the sky is the principle of rule and order, but Demeter on the earth enjoys a power which could become autonomous (threatens the entire cosmos) should Zeus ignore its reality and refuse concessions. The Eleusinian myth portrays the events that occur on earth, subsequent to Demeter's sojourn at Eleusis, as the result of logically prior events that occurred within the divine realm. As a result of the resolution of conflict among gods, Demeter "made fruit to spring up from the rich land, so that the whole wide earth was laden with leaves and flowers," (471-73) that "give men life" (pheresbion anthropoisin, 469).

Third, in addition to teaching the arts of agriculture, Demeter also taught the Eleusinians "the conduct of her rites and taught them all her mysteries...awful mysteries which no one may transgress or pry into or utter, for deep awe of the gods checks the voice" (475-79). The results of this work, as of her gifts of agriculture, also confer a boon upon human beings: "happy (olbios) is he among men upon earth who has seen these mysteries..." (480-81).

We may represent this underlying skein of mythical contrasts diagrammatically:



In this schema, 1) and 2) represent fundamentally different modes of life, divine and human, and 3) and 4) represent the results of Demeter's gifts to the Eleusinians (although all men receive the benefits of 3). There are further similarities, however, between 1) and 4), for they are, however opposite, both permanent; divine life on Olympus and "life" in Hades are constant modes of existence

that are not subject to further alteration. Conversely, 2) and 3) are modes which are subject to variation and change; agricultural life is seasonal and human existence is even more variable and precarious.

The bearing of this schema on our theme of “immortality” and its meaning in the myth become clear. As a result of Demeter’s “intrusion” at Eleusis, two results ensue. The activity of agricultural work acquires a specifically human meaning (*pheresbion anthropoisin*, 469) rather than remaining an expression of the creativity of the earth; the myth says that human beings must plow furrows and bind sheaves. Secondly, participation in the second gift of Demeter means that when initiates or *mystes* die they receive a lot or share (*aisan*, 481) different from that of the uninitiated:

Happy among men on earth is he who has seen them, i.e., the rites and mysteries of 476;  
 But he who is uninitiated into the rites, who has no part in them, never has a similar  
 Share or portion once he is dead and decaying in the darkness (of the nether world).<sup>15</sup>

That is, human life, initially understood as punctuated by death and issuing into a destiny of bad things down in the darkness and gloom, is qualified for the initiates by the work of Demeter.<sup>16</sup> The initiate is happy “on the earth” and has a share of good things in Hades.<sup>17</sup> There is also a reflexive effect, as though knowledge of a happy status in Hades and participation in Demeter’s mystery rites have an “inverse projection” or “retrojective effect” upon the time prior to existence in Hades: humans on earth are freely loved by the gods (*prophroneos philontai*, 487).

This cosmological framework has been extricated from the mythical materials as they narrate the events that led to the resolution of a crisis in the cosmos. This resolution, however, is as much a renewal as a restoration of the conditions that existed prior to the events of the myth. A new cosmos emerged. I have already shown that the relations between gods and humans were reorganized, that the cosmos came to mean life for humans and the source of worship and sacrifice for the gods, and that the mystery rites gave humans the possibility of happiness before and after death. To these can be added two further conclusions. First, since Zeus grants recognition to Demeter’s power of life and death and above all food, Demeter’s

power over earth is given a place in the governance of the world (461-62). The reorientation of governance, effected by the resolution of conflict, required the gods to exhibit an attitude toward men that goes beyond merely “bringing all things to pass.” Divine beings come to love human beings. Second, on the level of the human cosmos, the working of the soil and the acquisition of food was placed on a more sure footing; Demeter’s gift of food bound together the underground realm of Persephone and Plouton whence food comes, the surface of the earth where man dwell, and the sacrifice of the earth’s fruits to the gods to whom Demeter’s bounty was the alternative to perishing. In addition, humans received a new option as they faced death: neither resignation nor fear, but the happiness afforded by participation in Demeter’s mysteries.

Perhaps the most significant contribution of the Eleusinian mysteries to greek religion resides in the new significance accorded to Hades. At Eleusis, Hades as the place of *post-mortem* existence was no longer the dark and gloomy place where all humans eventually go. Nor did it become a place where the good were rewarded or the bad punished. Rather, existence after death *could be happy*. And the interesting point is that the idea of *post-mortem* existence was not abstracted and isolated as a theme in itself, but instead remained one theme inextricably bound to a network or system of cosmological relations.

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<sup>1</sup> There is a consensus on the late 7th century B.C.E. as a *terminus ad quem* for the hymn. For discussion of date, provenance, and relation to the rites, see Thomas W. Allen and E. E. Sikes, *The Homeric Hymns* (London: MacMillan, 1904), pp. 10-12; Thomas W. Allen, W. R. Halliday, and E. E. Sikes, *The Homeric Hymns*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), pp. 111-14 and 126; Jean Humbert, *Homère Hymnes*, Collection des Universités de France, Association Guillaume Budé, rev. ed.) Paris: Belles Lettres, 1959), pp. 38-39; and Francis R. Walton, “Athens, Eleusis, and the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*,” *Harvard Theological Review* 45 (1952): 105-114. N. J. Richardson, ed., *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), pp. 5-12 and 52-56, surpasses previous discussions. Translations in this paper are from Hugh G. Evelyn-White, *Hesiod, The Homeric Hymns and Homeric* (London: William Heinemann, and Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964).

<sup>2</sup> For other analyses of the myth, see Martin P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*, 2 vols., 3rd ed., Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft, no. 5 (Munich: C. H. Beck: 1950-1955), 1 (1955): 653-67 and *Greek Folk Religion* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940; reprint ed., New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1961), pp. 42-64; Karl Deichbräger, *Eleusinische Frömmigkeit und homerische Vorstellungswelt im homerischen Demeterhymnus* (Mainz: Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur and Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1950); Emile Janssens, "De Homerische Hymne aan Demeter," *Dialog: Tijdschrift voor Wijsbegeerte* 1 (1961): 297-320, which has also appeared in French, "Poésie et espérances eschatologiques dans l'Hymne homérique à Démeté," in *Religions de Salut*, 2 vols., Annales du Centre d'Etude des Religions, 2: 39-57, ed. Armand Abel, Annie Dorsinfang-Smets, Arthur Doucy, Henry Janne, Emile Janssens, William Lameer, Brussels: Institute de Sociologie, Universite Libre de Bruxells, 1962; Ugo Bianchi, "Sagezza olimpica e mistica eleusinia nell' inno omerico a Demetra," *Studi e materiale de storia della religione* 5 (1965): 161-193; and Walter Burkert, *Homo Necans: Interpretationen altgriechischer Opferriten und Mythen*, Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten, vol. 32 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1972), pp. 273-327.

<sup>3</sup> Fritz Wehrli, "Die Mysterien von Eleusis," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 31 (1934): 82-84, considers the role of Hecate and Helios to be superfluous, and therefore part of an earlier tradition displaced by the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. The "Orphic version" of the Demeter-Persephone myth does not provide external grounds for this conclusion, and the internal evidence shows an important role given both Hecate and Helios. Helios is the sun-god and a deity of the upper world. Hecate is a deity of the lower world and in the *Hymn* is identified with the moon. Consequently, these two deities are connected with light and knowledge; they knew the events that transpired between the upper and lower worlds, and they performed the task of mediation, based on their knowledge of the abduction.

<sup>4</sup> See Mary L. Lord, "Withdrawal and Return in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* and the Homeric Poems," *Classical Journal* 62 (1967): 214-48, for a comparison of Demeter's absence from the gods, the consequent disaster, and her eventual return with similar themes in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

<sup>5</sup> One can suggest a parallel function between the messengers and the children. In the divine world, the messengers mediate between the strong-willed antagonists, Zeus, Demeter, and Plouton. In the divine-human world, the children provide the opportunity for Demeter to express her different roles—the loss of Persephone permits Demeter to become a "human mother" and the loss of Demophoön enables Demeter to reveal herself as a goddess. In broader terms, the messengers and the children perform the functions of transforming conflict into resolution (the messengers) and disguise into revelation (the children).

<sup>6</sup> For a list of the deities, see Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 238; Lewis R. Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896-1909), 3: 130-43; and Martin P. Nilsson, "Die eleusinischen Gottheiten," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 32 (1935): 81-96.

<sup>7</sup> Nilsson, *Greek Folk Religion*, pp. 46-47 and *Geschichte*, 1: 471-74; for discussion of the iconographic materials, see "Eleusinischen Gottheiten," pp. 131-41.

<sup>8</sup> The Lysimachides votive relief, found in the cave-temple of Plouton and dating to the fourth century B.C.E.; see Mylonas, *Eleusis*, p. 99 and Farnell, *Cults*, vol. 3, pl. 1, and Nilsson, *Geschichte*, vol. 1, pl. 41, fog. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Karl Kerényi, *Eleusis: Archetypal Image of Mother and Daughter*, trans. Ralph Mannheim, Bollingen Series 65, Vol. 4 (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1967),

pp. 27-30 and 144-69, has called attention to the intimate bond between Demeter and Persephone, and considers it to be an instance of the “archetypal” image of the mother-daughter relationship. Whether Kerényi’s suggestions are helpful in the analysis of the myth is doubtful.

<sup>10</sup> At 477 we find the name “Triptolemos,” who, in the myth, plays the minor role of an Eleusinian political leader. Pausanias’ *Description of Greece* 1.14.2-4 accepts the tradition that he was the son of Keleus, the king of *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, although Pausanias does mention other parentage for Triptolemos—son of a priest Trochilos and an Eleusinian woman, son of Okeanos and Ge, of the Orphic Dysaules, and son of Poseidon; Pausanias concludes his account by saying that a vision prohibited him from pursuing his investigations into the story. Triptolemos is important in Apollodoros *Bibliotheka* 1.52-3 as the Eleusinian with whom Demeter stayed and to whom she gave a winged chariot to use in spreading wheat over the entire world. He is still more important in the iconographic tradition. Mylonas, *Eleusis*, pp. 192-97 and 210-11 and plates 68 and 74, and Nilsson, *Greek Folk Religion*, pp. 55-61 and plates 19 and 22, and “Eleusinischen Gottheiten,” pp. 84-86, agree that the story of Triptolemos acquired growing popularity in the late sixth and early fifth centuries and focuses on his mission of teaching the arts of agriculture to the world. Walter Burkert, *Homo Necans*, pp. 323-24, refers to a late tradition in which a Roman Emperor identified himself with Triptolemos (and another who identified with Demeter), but concludes that “in Greek times the distinction between immortal gods and mortal men obtained.” It is not inaccurate, perhaps to suggest that Triptolemos was an important figure in the city of Eleusis who was memorialized and “mythicized in iconography” because of his association with Demeter’s gift of agriculture.

<sup>11</sup> See John L. Myres, “Persephone and the Pomegranate,” *Classical Review* 52 (February, 1938): 51-52.

<sup>12</sup> For the relation between “lord of souls” and “giver of good gifts,” see Rose, “The Bride of Hades,” *Classical Philology* 20 (1925): 238-42.

<sup>13</sup> See Carl-Martin Edsman, *Ignis Divinis* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1949), pp. 204-07, and Janssens, “Homerische Hymne,” p. 303.

<sup>14</sup> See Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, trans. Willard R. Trask, World Perspectives, vol. 31 (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), pp. 10-14, and *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (New York and Cleveland: World Publishing Co., Meridian Books, 1958), pp. 425-28.

<sup>15</sup> This translation of 480-84 is mine and based on the text of Evelyn-White and Humbert. The only difference between the two is that Loeb uses *ἥερόεντι* at 482 whereas Humbert reads *εὐώνεντι*. Humbert *Homère*, p. 57, translates the passage: “Heureux qui possède, parmi les hommes de la terre, la Vision de ces mystères: Au contraire, celui qui n'est pas initié aux saints rites et celui qui n'y participe point n'ont pas le semblable destin, même lorsqu'ils sont morts dans les moites tenebres.” There is clearly a distinction between initiates and noninitiates, which Humbert emphasizes by the phrase “au contraire.” Further, the distinction between the two takes effect upon initiation and has to do with happiness on earth but more particularly *after* death. The initiate receives a “good portion” after his death, dissimilar to the portion of the uninitiate. In view of the Eleusinian emphasis on the return of man to the cosmic process upon death one could infer that the initiates are happy about their return but for the noninitiates there is only the unhappiness of decay. Yet the passage speaks of a share or lot awaiting all men upon death, with the share depending on whether or not one was initiated. *Φθίμενος περ* refers to the fact that death marks the difference between the blessings

given by Demeter prior to death and those given—or not given—after death. And ὑπὸ ζόφω ἡερόεντι most likely refers to Hades as the location of the *post-mortem* world, as it certainly does in line 80 (the realm where Plouton rules), and 402 (the underground realm, Hades) and most clearly in line 464 as the dwelling of Persephone and Plouton. Pindar understood the underworld to be the destination of man, and, with the Eleusinian mysteries in mind, wrote: “Happy is the person who has seen these things, in the recesses of the earth; he knows the goal of human life, he knows the beginning of a life given by god.” See Fr. 137 in John Sandys, *The Odes of Pindar, including The Principal Fragments*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press and London: William Heinemann, 1957), pp. 592-95, and quoted by Clement *Stromata* 3.518. The translation is mine.

<sup>16</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Zalmoxis: The Vanishing God*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), p. 47, points out the importance of distinguishing between deities of the dead who rule over all the dead and deities of the mysteries who admit only initiates to their realm. Günther Zuntz, *Persephone: Three Essays on Religion and Thought in Magna Graecia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 82-83, has demonstrated that Kore as maiden and Persephone as queen of the dead retained their distinction in many places in Greece, but that Eleusis was one of the few places where the identity of Persephone with Kore “was inculcated by cult-legends.”

<sup>17</sup> I translate 486-89, “Very happy among men on earth is he whom the gods love; they quickly send Plouton as guest to his great house, Plouton who gives wealth to humans.” Humbert, *Homère*, p. 58, gives this translation: “grand est le bonheur de celui qu’elles daignent aimer, parmi les hommes de la terre: Elles envoient aussitôt dans sa vaste demeure—et installent à son foyer—Ploutos, qui donne la richesse aux hommes mortels,” and adds the following note: “A l’époque où l’Hymne a été composé, le bénéfice de l’initiation est nettement matériel. En son vivant, l’initié possède la richesse à demeure; les profanes, même après la mort ne peuvent prétendre au même destin que les initiés.” Andrew Lang, *Homeric Hymns* (London: George Allen, 1899), p. 210, translates the crucial line “speedily do they send as a guest to his lofty hall Plutus, who giveth wealth to mortal men.” The grammar of the sentence—οἱ πέμπουσι...ές μέγα δῶμα πλοῦτον indicates that it is Plouton who is sent as guest, but whose house is not clear or is not indicated. It could be the house of the initiates, in which case the initiates would have an especially close relationship to Plouton while they were alive. The meaning would be that Plouton is sent to the houses of the initiates after their initiation, since it is Plouton who gives wealth to mortal men. On the other hand, it could also be the house of Plouton, for the house is the μέγα δῶμα, in which case the initiates would dwell with Plouton and Persephone after they died. Furthermore, the absence of a possessive and the implied contrast with ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων of the preceding line (487) may indicate the realm of Plouton. Perhaps the ambiguity is intentional, and in any case a particularly close relationship between Plouton, his realm, and the initiates is indicated.

## MANICHAEAN KINGSHIP: GNOSIS AT HOME IN THE WORLD

HANS-J. KLIMKEIT

From the beginning of his missionary activity, Mani, who himself was of royal Arsacid descent, attempted to win for his new religion not only people from a general public, but also the mighty and the powerful. The early missionary accounts make it clear that he often addressed himself to members of the ruling class, to kings and princes. And his disciples, too, attempted to win for their cause men from the nobility. How powerfully the image of kingship determined the thinking of Mani is reflected in the fact that he conceived of the world of light as a court, ruled by the King of Light, who is surrounded by five or twelve “Greatnesses” and many other divine beings. Herein he may have followed a Gnostic tradition as it is reflected in the “Song of the Pearl” in the apocryphal *Acts of Thomas* (§ 108-113), although this text, to be sure, was revised by Manichaeans.<sup>1</sup> Yet the prominence of the image of the king and his court in his religious system is indicative of his esteem of the power of kingship. Especially in Eastern Manichaeian texts the use of notions referring to kingship is striking. Thus the four aspects of the supreme deity, God, his Light, his Power and his Wisdom, referred to in Greek texts as the “Father of Greatness with four faces” (*Τὸν τετραπρόσωπὸν πατέρα τοῦ μεγέστου*)<sup>2</sup> are called in Turkish texts “the four kings of heaven” or “the four princely gods” (*tört ilig tängrilär*) (e.g. in Turfan Text T II D 169) or the “four bright royal deities” (*tört yaruq ilig tängrilär*).<sup>3</sup> The divine triad Jesus, Virgin of Light and Vahman (Great Nous) is repeatedly called “royal”,<sup>4</sup> and the Great Nous himself is referred to as “the king of the whole law” (*qamay nom iligi*).<sup>5</sup> The image of kingship also recurs in the promises to the just. Thus in a Parthian hymn (*Huwīdagmān*) the saviour says to the soul yearning for salvation: “Thou shalt put on a bright garment and gird thyself with light. And I (the saviour) shall place on thy head the diadem of kingship.”<sup>6</sup>

### 1. *Manichaean kings in Iran and adjacent areas*

In view of his esteem for kingship it is understandable that Mani approached the nobility from the very beginning of his missionary career. His first missionary journey led him to the courts of rulers within and beyond the Sassanian kingdom. Whereas the end of the *Cologne Mani Codex*, fragmentary as it is, refers to some travels in Iran and the boarders of the Roman Empire,<sup>7</sup> Iranian fragments from Turfan throw light on his activity at courts in Sassanian Iran and adjacent kingdoms. His first major missionary journeys led him to India, specifically to the realm of the Tūrān Shāh, located in what is now Baluchistan. After performing a miracle in the air where he leads a discussion with a divine being, the king recognizes him as the Buddha returned to earth and together with his retinue accepts his religion. And Mani promises him: “Be blessed! For as you are rich in glory and honour among men now, thus shalt thou be glorious and noble in the eyes of the gods on the last day of the soul. Among the gods and beneficent just thou shalt be eternally immortal.”<sup>8</sup> Of course these words have to be seen as a personal promise rather than a legitimation of Manichaean kingship. Yet they throw light on how the king devoted to the “religion of light” could be assessed.

It is quite in accord with his endeavour to gain kings as followers when Mani goes to the Sassanian capital after the death of Artašīr I to be present at the occasion of the enthronement of Shāhpur I and to preach his message there at that time. Sundermann points out: “This could have been the first opportunity Mani took avail of in Iran to speak to a large gathering of people. The day was chosen with deliberation. Everyone celebrated in the streets, and the coronation of a new ruler may have appeared to many as the beginning of a new political orientation.”<sup>9</sup> This coronation day, probably 9.4.343,<sup>10</sup> marked the beginning of a rather successful missionary career in Iran. We do not know when Mani gained access to the court, but it is certain that the king was open to his cause, without, however, converting to his religion. In the fragments preserved of the *Šāburagān*, the book Mani wrote for Shāhpur I to introduce his religion to the ruler, we find no hints as to his assessment of the Sassanian king, but we can suppose that he did all he could to gain

a good relationship to the ruler, in spite of the fact that later Manichaean documents, stemming from times of persecution, tended to identify the rulers of the world with the evil archons of the cosmos. Mani, who probably had friends and well-wishers at the court, was allowed to preach his religion throughout the Sassanian kingdom. “Mani”, says Widengren, “apparently made a strong personal impression on Šāhpur, for he spent various years in his ‘entourage’ (Kephalaia I, p. 15: 31-34), i.e. he belonged to the servants of the king and was one of his followers. According to the feudal Iranian system there was between Mani and his ruler a personal relationship of obedience and trusteeship.”<sup>11</sup> In how far Kartēr, Mani’s Zoroastrian opponent, was able to influence that relationship at this time already, we cannot tell. As we know from Turfan fragment M 47 I, Mani was able to continue his missionary activity throughout Shāhpur’s reign; he was able to win Shāhpur’s brother, the ruler of Mesene, a small kingdom at the mouth of the Tigris, for his cause.<sup>12</sup> And also in the northeastern part of the Sassanian realm he had a royal well-wisher, Perōz, also a brother of Shāhpur I. Under his protection the spread of the new religion made great advances in Merv. A letter written by one of his officials called Ōhrmizd was cause for great joy to Mani and his disciples.<sup>13</sup> Another king converted by Mani—not by his disciple Mār Ammō, as hitherto assumed,—was the ruler of Waruzān, which Sundermann locates in Caucasian Iberia and connects with a missionary journey to Georgia.<sup>14</sup> After seeing a vision of the prophet, he asks about Mani and his teaching and decides to become an adherent or at least a promoter of his religion.

Under Shāhpur’s son and successor Mani seems to have enjoyed the same privileges as under Shāhpur I himself. It was only under Vahrām I that the opposing Zoroastrian party gained stronger influence, but even at his time there must have been good relations between the preacher of the new law and the court. At his last audience with Vahrām he reminds him of the manifold good deeds which he did to his family and his servants.<sup>15</sup> And even at this time he seems to have had royal patrons like king Bāt who accompanied him for part of the way on his last journey to the capital.<sup>16</sup>

Mani’s disciples also seem to have attempted to win kings and princes for the cause of the new religion. Thus we know of Mār

Ammō, the missionary to the east, that he was active in Abaršahr and Merv. In a fragment of a missionary history it says: “He ordained numerous kings and rulers, grandees and noblemen, queens and ladies, princes and princesses.”<sup>17</sup>

In how far Manichaeism was able to win kings and princes in its subsequent spread to the East we do not know. It is, however, probable that not only Sogdian merchants, who were instrumental in spreading the faith to China, but also Sogdian rulers and men of noble birth embraced and promoted the “religion of light”. Henning has made it probable that in Maralbaši, between Kashgar and Aqsu, “there was, around 700 a Manichaean congregation, organized and led by Sogdians, lay members of which belonged to the Sakian nobility.”<sup>18</sup> We can surmize that there were also Manichaean centres in the original homeland of the Sogdians, in the area between the Oxus and the Ferghana valley. Whether they enjoyed royal protection is difficult to say. The artistic remains of the palaces of the Sogdian kings at Afrasiab and Piandjikent give no clue as to the presence of Manichaeans at the court, but both A. W. Shischkin and A. M. Bilinizki believe that the art of Piandjikent reveals Parthian influence which could have been mediated by Manichaeans.<sup>19</sup>

Although not much can be said about Manichaeism’s relationship to kingship in pre-Turkic Central Asia, it is worth noting that the Manichaeans approached the Chinese court at the beginning of the 8th century. In 719, a Manichaeian “teacher” from Tocharistan gained access to the court of the T’ang. He is introduced to us with his Sogdian title *mozak*.<sup>20</sup> It seems that the introduction of the planetary week in China was due to Sogdian, maybe even Manichaean influence. Be that as it may, the religion of Mani must have spread rapidly in the Middle Kingdom, for in 732 already an imperial edict prohibited the Chinese to adopt that religion, an exception being made for Sogdians. When the religion of light was prohibited again in 843, the Uighurs were probably allowed to retain that religion.<sup>21</sup>

## 2. *The introduction of Manichaeism as state religion among the Turcs*

The most far-reaching political consequences for Manichaeism in the East resulted from the encounter of the Uighur ruler Bögü

Khan with Manichaean, probably Sogdian *electi* at Loyang. The Uighurs had been called by the T'ang government to help suppress a revolt by one An lu-shou, himself half-Sogdian. In 762, the Uighur army was able to occupy Loyang. It was here that the Qaghan of the Uighur Turcs embraced the religion of light and consequently made it the official religion of his vast empire of the steppes. A trilingual inscription from Kara Balgassun at the upper arm of the Orchon tells us about these events. The Uighur text is hardly preserved, the Sogdian text is rather fragmentary, whereas the Chinese version, in spite of lacunae, is quite complete.<sup>22</sup>

From the inscription we learn that the full title of the Turkish ruler was *tängridä qut bulmïš alp külüg* (*bögü qaghan*), “who received his charisma (or fortune) from heaven, the valiant, illustrious, (wise qaghan)”. From the Chinese inscription we learn, furthermore, that the king took four monks (i.e. *electi*) back home with him who propagated the teaching of the two principles and the three periods, i.e. the basic doctrine of Manichaeism, in his realm. Among them was probably that “Master of the Law” of whom it says: “The Master of the Law was wonderfully learned in the doctrine of light and understood completely the seven [canonical Manichaean] scriptures. His capacities were higher than the mast of a ship, his eloquence was like a cascade. Therefore the Uighurs could introduce the true law.”<sup>23</sup> High officials, the advisors of internal and foreign affairs, accepted the religion according to the inscription and declared: “Now we regret our former mistakes and wish to serve the true religion.” And in an edict the ruler proclaimed: “This religion is all-pervading and wonderful. It is difficult to gain it and difficult to observe it. Twice and thrice have I studied it with sincerity. Formerly I was unknowing and I called the demons ‘Buddha’; now I have understood the true (law) and can no longer serve (these false gods).” The ruler not only promotes the new religion in his kingdom but also orders the images of the former deities to be destroyed. We can be quite sure that this regulation also effected Buddhism. In the royal decree it says: “All images of demons, sculptures and paintings, should be destroyed by fire; all those who venerate genii and fall down before them should..., and the religion of light should be accepted.” It is noteworthy that Manichaeism as a state religion displays the same intolerance it had to suffer under

when persecuted in the Roman and Persian empires, and this in spite of its ethical standards which are emphasized in the inscription where it says: “(The land) of barbarian customs, where blood was steaming, shall be changed to one where vegetables are eaten; the state where killing (was widespread) shall be changed to a kingdom where men incite each other (to do) good.”<sup>24</sup>

The inscription now names a number of rulers who had apparently embraced Manichaeism. Of these, the Qaghan who ruled between 808 and 821 and in whose reign the inscription was written, is mentioned especially; he is referred to as the “divine qaghan”. His achievements with respects to the new religion are summed up thus: “He ordered that the monks should be treated generously and that the hearers should live in peace.”<sup>25</sup> He can thus be regarded as a ruler who consolidated the position of the new religion.

The Chinese inscription gives the impression as if Manichaeism was introduced without much opposition. Thus it says: “The king of the religion was full of praise when he heard that the Uighurs had adopted the true religion... (Virtue) led the monks and nuns and entered the kingdom, to be spread here and to praise (the religion). Subsequently the (great) number of the disciples of the mu-chö (i.e. *mozak*) roamed all over the land in all directions, from west to east, and they went and came, propagating the religion.”<sup>26</sup>

In actual fact the introduction of the new religion was probably not as simple as suggested here. In a later Uighur text, written from the viewpoint of the *electi*, it becomes obvious that there was opposition to the spread of Manichaeism and that the king himself did not accept the new faith as unhesitatingly as suggested here.<sup>27</sup> The editors of the Uighur document, W. Bang and A. von Gabain, write: “We see, that the Uighur Qayan decided to convert only after a severe inner conflict, or rather that he relapsed after a first conversion, did some (anti-Manichaean) “deed” which was regarded as a great sin by the elect ... and that he then repented. We have to assume that this “deed” was done at the instigation of some—unfortunately unnamed—Tarqan [i.e. political official], who was probably the leader of a certain party which opposed the introduction of the new doctrine, which in its tendency was dangerous for the state.”<sup>28</sup>

Indeed, the power of the Manichaeans must have been great in the state prior to the official acceptance of the new religion. The relationship of the Qaghan to the elect in the text makes it clear that they already held a considerable position. Furthermore, the document refers to “merchants” (*sartlar*), which could well have been Sogdian Manichaeans whose economic potential was of great weight. In so far as the clerical leaders were concerned, their importance in the state is made quite clear in the document from Turfan. It tells us that the king, after acceptance of the religion ordered his people to obey their commands. When they are incited to give alms (do the “soul service”) and to observe the precepts of the religion, they are to act according to the instructions of the elect. According to the text, the decree elicited great joy in the congregations and even amongst the people who now hail the “divine king” and honour the elect on the occasion of this second introduction of the religion. For it says: “For the second time and anew they loved God and believed in him.”<sup>29</sup> It is worth noting that the Qaghan now transfers the military order of the state to the church and puts a supervisor in charge of every ten men to see to it that good works are done and alms are given. Whoever becomes negligent or falls into sin is to be instructed in matters of religion. We can assume that penalties were also levied against those who persistently failed to meet the religious requirements.

The “religion of light” remained the state religion in the realm of the Uighurs from 762 to 840 when the Turkish kingdom was destroyed by the Kirghiz. Now many Uighurs fled to Kansu and to the Tarim basin. Here a small Manichaeian kingdom was established around 850, which continued to exist until about 1250, i.e. up to the time of the Mongols.

### 3. *Manichaeian kingship in Central Asia*

It is only with caution that we can deduce from the titles of the Manichaeian rulers of the Uighur empire as well as of the kingdom of Kočo information about the self-understanding of Manichaeian kings. Yet it is noticeable that it is only after the introduction of the “religion of light” that the Qaghans refer to their fortune, or charisma (*qut*), as being granted not only by heaven (*tängri*), as in

the case of Bögü Khan, but more specifically by sun and moon. In Manichaeism, sun and moon are the two “ships” or “palaces” (*ordular*) of light wherein the saving deities reside. In the sun, the “Third Messenger”, the “Mother of Life” and the “Living Spirit” have their place, whereas “Jesus the Splendour”, the “Virgin of Light” and “First Man” are connected with the moon. In Turkish Manichaean texts “Jesus the Splendour” is even identified with the moon god (*ay tängri*), whereas the sun is especially related to Mithra, whom Mani identified with the “Living Spirit”.<sup>30</sup> But there is also the conception that the Saviour Jesus has his place in sun and moon,<sup>31</sup> which are often referred to as one god (*kün ay tängri*) in Turkish texts. F. W. K. Müller saw in the connection between regality and the sun and the moon a conscious resumption of royal titles of the Hsiung-nu, among whom the ruler bore the title “the great *šan-yü*, engendered by heaven and earth, installed by sun and moon.”<sup>32</sup> Yet A. Bombaci rightly points out that the return to such an old tradition is improbable: “...a conscious resumption by the Uighurs of the Hsiung-nu tradition after such a long time seems rather unlikely. The more so because the formulas with “sun” and “moon” do not appear suddenly but are derived from the more simpler one *tängridä qut bulmış* [“who has received his charisma from heaven”] which in some way seems to continue the formula *tängridä bolmış* [“born of heaven”] of the T’u-chüeh Qaghans, if it was not already employed by them.”<sup>33</sup>

The connection between regality and the sun and moon is widespread in the milieu of Iran and Central Asia, yet it strikes one “that the phrases with ‘sun’ and ‘moon’ appear after the contact of the Uighurs with Manichaeism.”<sup>34</sup> Indeed, the list of names of Uighur kings<sup>35</sup> reveals that only from 789, i.e. after the acceptance of Manichaeism, the words are employed: “who has received his charisma (*qut* or *ülug*) from the moon god.” Six Qaghans, ruling between 789 and 833, have these words in their names or titles. A Manichaean understanding of the title referring to the moon god is clearly implied in the case of at least one king where the words relating to the moon god are connected with a reference to the Manichaean god Vahman, the Great Nous.<sup>36</sup>

Some rulers derive their *qut* not only from the moon, but from both sun and moon. Thus the emperor in whose time the Kara

Balgassun inscription was written refers to himself after 812—according to Chinese sources—as he “who has received his charisma from sun and moon god.”<sup>37</sup> Finally there is at least one Manichaean king who derives his charisma from the sun alone, a ruler who was in power from 821-824. But this is quite an exception; generally the moon god is referred to as the authority legitimising regal authority. “The god Moon”, say Bombaci, “enjoyed among them (i.e. the Manichaeans) a particular favour and this fact could explain the prevailing of the formula with ‘moon’ in comparison with that of the ‘sun’.”<sup>38</sup> Finally, it is noteworthy that one ruler, Qaghan Alp Qutluγ (779-789), who seems to have been an adversary of the Manichaeans, refrains from using the terms “sun and moon god” in his title.

In a Buddhist text from Turfan the king is referred to as one “on whom the great *qut* rests” (*ulur qut ornanmisi*). “In this formula”, say Bombaci, “the verb *ornan*- = ‘to take place’ ... suggests a personification of Fortune.”<sup>39</sup> The fortune of the ruler can be qualified as holy in the phrase *iduq qut*, which goes back to pre-Manichaean times. It is already employed in the Orkhon inscriptions with reference to the rulers of the Turkish Basmil.<sup>40</sup> But the Manichaeans also employed the phrase. In two Turkic Manichaean texts (TM 417, TM 47) the Manichaean king bears in his title the word *iduq qut*. In one of these documents which is ascribed to the period 821-824, i.e. to the time of the Uighur kingdom, reference is made to “our divine king, the *iduq qut*” who has appeared in the Ötükän mountains.<sup>41</sup> Here the fortune or charisma of the king is intimately connected with the fortune of the geographical centre of the Uighur kingdom. Thus the text says: “The fortune (*qut*) of the land of Ötükän, the fortune of the first wise kings, of the fathers of the kings, the fortune of the holy throne may rest upon our heavenly *iduq qut*.”<sup>42</sup> “The Manichaean scribes”, says A. von Gabain, “have ... no inhibitions in referring with respect to the Shamanistic deity of the Ötükän.”<sup>43</sup>

A direct connection can also be established between kingship and particular saving deities of Manichaeism, the seven and the twelve “mighty ones”, who are representations of the cosmic saviour residing in sun and moon. In one text it says: “Might and aid may come from the Seven and the Twelve Mighty and Powerful and rest

on the Fortune of the beautiful, lovely, noble, luminous, valiant, sublime, mighty king.”<sup>44</sup> At the same time the blessing of the Manichaean deities is implored upon the whole realm and its institutions.

The ruler, as we see, has his own fortune, which is strengthened by both traditional and Manichaean deities. Over against the *qut* of the ruler, there is the *Qut* of the Church, Nom Qutī, who is the personification of the spirit dwelling in the Church and enlightening its members, especially its leaders. Nom Qutī is often translated as “the majesty of religion” or “the majesty of the law”. He is the Great Nous of the Western Manichaeans, the Vahman of the Iranians. He inspires the bishops and is called upon at the time of their enthronisation. In an Iranian hymn the “new bishop” is called “a good son of Vahman.”<sup>45</sup>

One could see the duality of worldly and spiritual power expressed in the *qut* of the king and the *Qut* of the Church. Of course they are not inseparable, rather, they are intimately connected. In one Manichaean painting, the king is seen kneeling before the spiritual authority of the bishop or some other high-ranking religious personage, and below this scene we see the *qut* of the bishop as an angelic psychopompos, leading the *qut* of the king, i.e. the king in his *qut* aspect. Though this is our interpretation of the miniature painting,<sup>46</sup> we do have a text telling us about the close connection between the king and the authority of the Church. Of the king it says, he is “clothed by the majesty of religion” (*nom qutī kädilmis*).<sup>47</sup> When we consider that in Turfan text T II D 176 Nom Qutī is called “the king of the whole religion” (*gamaγ nom ilgi*), we can assume that the ruler, blessed by the spirit of the Church, is a *defensor fidei*. This is even expressly stated in a document published by F. W. K. Müller in 1912 (T II D 135), where the angelic forces are requested to guard the whole community of hearers with the king at its head. He is referred to as “the ruler of the east, the protector of the religion and the helper of the truthful.”<sup>48</sup> And his association with the religion is so intimate that he is called “the son of Mani” (*zahag ‘i Mani*) here.

The close connection between the Manichaean king and the high representatives of the Church as well as the people also becomes obvious in two texts used for the enthronisation of rulers.<sup>49</sup> In the first

text we hear that after the death of a Turkish ruler a new king is chosen. Not only the people and high representatives of the government but also leading clerics take part in the ceremony. The new king receives a holy name (*idug at*) and then is seated on his golden throne. Subsequently, the “four bright kings of heaven”, i.e. the Manichaean tetrad God, Light, Power and Wisdom are requested to bestow their blessing upon the king.

In the second text on the back side of the sheet the king is likened to the moon which rises after the setting of the sun—i.e. the old ruler. It is decided that he should ascend the throne, and the blessing of the Ötükän mountains and the “earlier wise kings” as well as of the seven and the twelve redeeming powers of Manichaeism are implored to grant him power and to sustain him.<sup>50</sup>

The two documents do not allow us to discern any specific regal ideology, but they do reveal the relationship between Manichaean kingship and spiritual authority, which is itself independent of secular power but grants to the ruler power to fulfil his duty as the protector of the religion and guardian of the faithful. Furthermore, it shows that the enthronement of kings was ritualised in a manner reflecting the high importance of the religion for the state.

#### *4. The consequence of Manichaean kingship for the understanding of the world*

The fact that Manichaeism became a state religion, or at least a religion privileged by the state, was bound to have its effect on the relationship of the Gnostic religion to the world. Whereas the Iranian hymns to the Living Self, stemming from a time of persecution, reveal the typical Gnostic motif of assessing the world and the body as a prison, comparing life on earth with the fate of a ship tossed about in the turmoiled waters of the sea, many Turkic texts strike a note of hope. To be sure, there are many documents representing the body and the world as being ruled by destructive demons,<sup>51</sup> yet we also find another attitude to the world. Over against the Gnostic decrying of life on earth, that life can now gain new significance. Thus in the Middle Persian text edited by Müller, quoted above, the ruler is referred to as being “worthy of both (forms of) happiness, of both lives, of both sovereignties, of the body and the soul.”<sup>52</sup> Quite in accordance with the implication of

this thought is another document where the “divine royal Khan” is called “perfect in both types of the good”, i.e. in spiritual and worldly matters.<sup>53</sup> It strikes one that in many Turkic texts the aim of many prayers and supplications is to gain not only spiritual welfare but also bodily well-being and blessing on earth.

In so far as the religion is concerned, it not only comes to terms with secular, worldly power, it establishes itself as a power on earth. Thus the monasteries are not places where the ideal of poverty is upheld, but rather centres of political and economic power. Light is shed on this state of affairs by a document pertaining to the economy of Manichaean monasteries at Kočo.<sup>54</sup> The document makes it clear that the monasteries possessed estates and storehouses, horses and probably livestock. Supervisors (*qaryucilar*) and superintendents (*ış ayyūi*) were responsible for the management of the affairs of the monastery and the provisioning of its inhabitants with food, clothes and fire-wood. And the priests, referred to with the honorary title of *tängrilär* (“divine ones”) have servants waiting on them during their meals. Draconic measures are taken against those who fail to do their duty in the service of the monastery. The clerics with the “divine bishop” at their head apparently had a power position they held nowhere else outside the Turkish Manichaean world.

This position was bound to have its effect on the approach to worldly affairs. Whereas Coptic texts as well as many Iranian documents are marked by a distinct theology of suffering, the Turkic texts often enough give expression to the joy of victory. Certainly there are enough passages deplored the pain of worldly life and commenting on the foulness of the body. And the hope for salvation in a life beyond is repeatedly expressed. But beside such words we often read of happiness, gladness, delight and satisfaction. Telling is the fact that in the cosmological texts the vanquishing of the demons (*yäklär*), especially the head of the demons, Simnu, is narrated.<sup>55</sup> Parallel to this is the joy about the vanquishing of the evildoers, i.e. the opponents of the Manichaean religion. Thus it says in one text: “Because darkness has been dispersed, the evil-doers have often fallen into disarray. The confused have all fallen into misfortune.”<sup>56</sup> And one reason for the joy of the just is made quite explicit when it says: “Because he (i.e. the

king) has established the law of the Burchan (i.e. Mani), we are saved from sorrowfulness and wretchedness.”<sup>57</sup> In this text, the establishment of the law is connected with the good deed of that king who is “clothed by Nom Quti” and who brought to the land a teacher by the name of Noydar.

The contrast between a Manichaean state and one where the religion of light does not prevail is made explicit in text T II D 75: “If hence in the world there is a realm, there is a city, where your (i.e. Mani’s) foundation and root (i.e. doctrine) is not present, then that realm, that city is without colour, without beauty ... without power.” But to his followers Mani, the apostel, gave “vigour and joy ... when we came to the land of the Uighurs”<sup>58</sup> to establish the Manichaean order.

The situation of well-being and happiness on earth is finally expressed repeatedly in the colophons. Thus one scribe, at the end of the “Book of the two Principles”, writes: “It was recited with great joy, it was written with deep love. Now it was written with great zeal at the sublime place (?).”<sup>59</sup> The whole situation of the scribe is a fortunate one. He writes in an auspicious hour, in a monastery at Čigil, “the residence of the God Nom Qutï, the healing place of the mardaspand gods ... in the residence of the pure, strong angels.”<sup>60</sup> The people of the strong Arγu-Talas tribe where he lives are described as “happy”, which is quite in accordance with the whole passage where the terms “fortunate”, “victorious”, “good” etc. keep recurring. This stands in marked contrast to the situation of the writers of the Coptic texts who call upon their co-religionists to endure in wake of suffering, pointing to the endurance of the martyrs as described in the apocryphal acts of the apostles.<sup>61</sup> The contrast is highlighted by another Turkish passage which was written on the occasion of a West Turkish ruler assuming office. Even if he was not a Manichaean himself, he honours the Manichaean elect. Thus the scribe can write: “Now may there be well-being and blessing. At the end of the completely good prayer may they be joyous and happy together with (?) the \*preservers of the religion. And may the ... chosen pure elect be made joyous and be honoured. And may victory be granted to me...”<sup>62</sup> The concluding words express the hope that worldly blessing be granted to the scribe and that he may ultimately acquire salvation.

Hence the texts of Turkish Manichaeism allow us to discern an attitude to the world to be found nowhere else in the realm of Gnosticism. Being protected by a Manichaean king, the community of scribes and elect could assess the world as a place where the blessing of the gods was experienced already. Certainly ultimate salvation could only be found in the other world, but the light of that other world already shone into this world.

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#### ABBREVIATIONS

Boyce, *Reader* M. Boyce, *A Reader in Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian*, (Acta Iranica 9), Leiden etc., 1975.

Böhlig, *Gnosis* III *Die Gnosis. Dritter Band: Der Manichäismus*. Unter Mitwirkung von Jes Peter Asmussen eingeleitet, übersetzt und erläutert von A. Böhlig, Zürich, München, 1980.

BTT Berliner Turfantexte.

JThS The Journal of Theological Studies.

SPAW Sitzungsbericht der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

TM I, II, III A. von Le Coq, *Türkische Manichaica aus Chotscho* (Abh. d. Preuss. Akad. d. Wiss. 1911, Nr. 6; 1919, Nr. 3; 1922, Nr. 2), Berlin, 1911-1922.

Sundermann, MmT W. Sundermann, *Mitteliranische manichäische Texte kirchengeschichtlichen Inhalts* (BTT XI), Berlin, 1981.

UAJb Ural-Altaische Jahrbücher.

ZPE Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. G. Bornkamm, “Thomasakten”, in: E. Hennecke-W. Schneemelcher, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, Vol. II, 4th ed. (Tübingen, 1971), pp. 304-5.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. A. V. W. Jackson, “The Fourfold Aspect of the Supreme Being in Manichaeism”, *Bulletin of the Linguistic Society of India* 5 (1935), pp. 287-296.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. in P. Zieme, *Manichäisch-türkische Texte*, (BTT V), Berlin, 1975, p. 53.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. in T II D 176: TM II 15.

<sup>5</sup> TM III, 15.

<sup>6</sup> Boyce, *Reader*, p. 165, Text cx.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. A. Henrichs-L. Koenen, “Ein griechischer Mani-Codex”, *ZPE* 5 (1970), p. 110.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Text in Boyce, *Reader*, pp. 34-37; German Translation in Böhlig, *Gnosis* III, p. 92. New ed. of the encounter with the Tûrân-Shâh in W. Sundermann, *MmT*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>9</sup> W. Sundermann, “Zur frühen missionarischen Wirksamkeit Manis”, *Acta Orient. Hung.* 24 (1971), p. 100.

<sup>10</sup> Sundermann, *op. cit.* p. 101.

<sup>11</sup> G. Widengren, *Die Religionen des Iran*, (Stuttgart, 1965), p. 300.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Text in Boyce, *Reader*, pp. 37-38; German Translation in Böhlig, *Gnosis* III, pp. 91-92.

<sup>13</sup> W. B. Henning, "Neue Materialien zur Geschichte des Manichäismus", *ZDMG* 90 = N.F. 15 (1936), p. 407.

<sup>14</sup> Sundermann, *MmT*, p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> Text in Boyce, *Reader*, pp. 44-45; Transl. in Böhlig, *Gnosis* III, p. 95-96.

<sup>16</sup> Text in Boyce, *Reader*, p. 43.

<sup>17</sup> W. B. Henning, "Waručān Šāh", *Journal of the Greater India Society* XI, 2, (1944), p. 87; cf. Sundermann, *MmT*, p. 41.

<sup>18</sup> Henning, "Neue Materialien", p. 412.

<sup>19</sup> A. M. Belinizki, *Mittelasien - Kunst der Sogden* (Leipzig 1980), p. 220.

<sup>20</sup> Henning, "Neue Materialien", p. 412.

<sup>21</sup> W. Eberhard, *China und seine westlichen Nachbarn*, Art. "Notizen zum Manichäismus und Mazdaismus in China", (Darmstadt, 1978), p. 30.

<sup>22</sup> Translation of the Chinese version in G. Schlegel, "Die chinesische Inschrift auf dem uigurischen Denkmal in Kara Balgassun", *Mémoires de la Société Finno-Ougrienne* IX (Helsingfors, 1896), V-XIV; 1-141. Critical new edition of the main passages dealing with Manichaeism in: E. Chavannes-P. Pelliot, "Un traité manichéen retrouvé en Chine", *Journal Asiatique* 20 (1913), pp. 186ff. Ed. and translation of the Sogdian version in O. Hansen, "Zur sogdischen Inschrift auf dem dreisprachigen Denkmal von Karabalgassun", *Journal Société Finno-Ougrienne* XLIV, (Helsinki, 1930), pp. 5-39.

<sup>23</sup> Chavannes-Pelliot, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

<sup>24</sup> Quotations according to Chavannes-Pelliot, *op. cit.*, pp. 197-8.

<sup>25</sup> Chavannes-Pelliot, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

<sup>26</sup> Chavannes-Pelliot, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-191.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. W. Bang-A. von Gabain, *Türkische Turfantexte* II, (SPAW 1929), (Berlin, 1929), pp. 411-430.

<sup>28</sup> Bang-von Gabain, *op. cit.*, p. 412.

<sup>29</sup> Bang-von Gabain, *op. cit.*, p. 419.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. W. Sundermann, "The Five Sons of the Manichaean God Mithra", in U. Bianchi, ed., *Mysteria Mithrae*, (Leiden, 1979), p. 785.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. E. Rose, *Die manichäische Christologie*, (Studies in Oriental Religions 5), (Wiesbaden, 1979), pp. 166ff.

<sup>32</sup> F. W. K. Müller, "Uigurische Glossen", in: *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift* 8 (1919/1920), p. 315.

<sup>33</sup> A. Bombaci, "Qutluγ Bolsun!, Part 2", *UAJb* 38 (1966), p. 14.

<sup>34</sup> Bombaci, *ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Müller, "Glossen", p. 314.

<sup>36</sup> TM III, 43.

<sup>37</sup> Bombaci, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>38</sup> Bombaci, *ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Bombaci, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>40</sup> A. von Gabain, "Steppe und Stadt im Leben der alten Türken", *Der Islam* 29 (1950), p. 61.

<sup>41</sup> TM III, 34; cf. A. von Gabain, "Steppe und Stadt", pp. 61f.

<sup>42</sup> TM III, 34: 16-22.

<sup>43</sup> A. von Gabain, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>44</sup> TM III, 35: 21-24. Transl. according to Bombaci.

<sup>45</sup> Boyce, *Reader*, p. 146.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. H.-J. Klimkeit, “Hindu Deities in Manichaean Art”, in: *Zentralasiatische Studien* 14/2 (1980), pp. 179-199.

<sup>47</sup> TM 296. Cf. TM III 36, Nr. 16:7.

<sup>48</sup> F. W. K. Müller, “Der Hofstaat eines Uighuren-Königs”, in: *Festschrift V. Thomsen*, (Leipzig, 1912), p. 209.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. R. Rahmeti Arat, “Der Herrschertitel Iduq-qut”, *UAJb* 35 (1964), p. 157.

<sup>50</sup> Rahmeti Arat, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

<sup>51</sup> E.g. TM 298; TM III, 9f.

<sup>52</sup> Müller, “Hofstaat”, p. 209.

<sup>53</sup> TM III, 41f, Nr. 27.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. P. Zieme, “Ein uigurischer Text über die Wirtschaft manichäischer Klöster im uigurischen Reich”, in *Researches in Altaic Languages*, ed. L. Ligeti, (Budapest 1975), pp. 331-38, S. N. C. Lieu, “Precept and Practice in Manichaean Monasticism”, *JThS*, N.S. XXXII, 1 (1981), pp. 153-173.

<sup>55</sup> E.g. TM I, 19.

<sup>56</sup> TM III, 6.

<sup>57</sup> TM II, 35f, Nr. 16.

<sup>58</sup> T II D 62; TM III, 40, Nr. 25.

<sup>59</sup> T II D 171; TM I, 26.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> Cf. P. Nagel, “Die apokryphen Apostelakten des 2. und 3. Jh.s in der manichäischen Literatur”, in K. W. Tröger, *Gnosis und Neues Testament* (Berlin, 1978), pp. 154ff.

<sup>62</sup> TM I, pp. 27-28: 11-19.

## THE GURU IN HINDU TRADITION

JOEL D. MLECKO

### *Introduction*

A striking perception for a student of religions is the universal insistence that instruction by an adept teacher is necessary for development in the spiritual life. This insistence is especially vivid with regard to the guru in the traditions of Hinduism.

With the variety implicit in Hindu social and religious life and with the lack of an unified hierarchical organization, the individual guru as religious teacher plays an important role in the transmission and development of the Hindu religious tradition, from the passing on of religious knowledge to being himself a *locus* for worship.

It is a general Hindu belief that only through evolution (*karma* and reincarnation) and through education within the guru system is a person perfectible. For Hindus, religion is manifested or embodied in the continuing, successive presence of the guru. It is the guru who reveals the meaning of life; he is the immediate, incarnate exemplar in life, and as such, the guru is an inspirational source for the Hindu. The basic strengths of the guru's role are such that guruhood is the oldest form of religious education still extant. An understanding of guruhood, therefore, is of paramount importance in any consideration of the Hindu traditions.

The pan-Indian, Sanskrit term "guru" has a cluster of meanings with significance beyond that of the English translation, "teacher." *Gu* means "ignorance" and *ru*, "dispeller." The guru is a dispeller of ignorance, all kinds of ignorance; thus, there are gurus not only for specifically spiritual development but also for dancing, music, wrestling, and other skills.

The term "guru" also means "heavy" or "weighty" and might well illustrate the belief that accomplished or holy persons are characterized by an uncommon weight. Jan Gonda states that "it must primarily have described the man who on account of his

special knowledge and function was held to be a bearer of power conspicuous by his prestige, ‘weight’, and influence.”<sup>1</sup>

It is also maintained, though not commonly, that “guru” is derived from the Sanskrit root *giri*, meaning “one who calls.” Kirpal Singh writes: “Thus he who always hears this (divine) call within himself, and is devotedly attached to the call and can make it manifest in others is described...as Guru.”<sup>2</sup>

If the word “guru” means many things, it is because the guru is many things. He is an entity which in Western culture has no exact counterpart. For the guru is a teacher, counselor, father-image, mature ideal, hero, source of strength, even divinity integrated into one personality. Primarily, however, the guru is the personal teacher of spirituality, that is, of the basic, ultimate values perceived within the Hindu tradition. Further, the guru possesses experiential knowledge, not only intellectual knowledge, of these values. In a word, the guru is indispensable for spiritual development. In early Hinduism he was a vital factor in imparting *Vedic* knowledge; in later thought the guru became the visible embodiment of truth and in some cases he was worshipped as an incarnate deity.

### *The Guru In Vedic and Upaniṣadic Literature*

In his earliest role the guru was a teacher of the *Vedas* and the various skills needed for their study, such as grammar, metrics, etymology, and mnemonics. By means of a question and answer dialogue, the guru led the *śiṣya* or student-seeker-devotee into philosophical and spiritual inquiry. In this process, the use of books was rare; knowledge was orally transmitted; the interpersonal dimension of education was highly regarded. Further, great importance was attached to the proper accent and pronunciation in the *Vedic* recitation; these could be correctly learned only from a properly qualified teacher. Thus the guru was indispensable since he was the repository of the people’s ultimate knowledge and right action as recorded in the *Vedas*.

The guru was generally a *Brāhmaṇa* and his students were a very select group drawn from *Brāhmaṇa*, *Kṣatriya* and *Vaiśya* families. In ancient India these students ideally lived within the *gurukula* or the

extended family of the guru since great importance was placed on association and imitation in the learning process. This close, personal contact enabled the guru to intimately and radically influence and mold the *śiṣya*'s life.

There are scattered references to the religious teacher in the *Vedas*. In the *Rg Veda* (IV, 5, 6) the guru is described as the source and inspirer of the knowledge of the Self, or the essence of reality, for the seeker. In the *Yajur Veda* (VII, 27), the guru is described as the one who blesses and enhances the seeker's spiritual life. He does this not only through the knowledge he imparts as a teacher but also through the ritual he performs as a priest. The Aryans conceived the world as a realm of powers that affected and controlled their lives. Nature was clearly a main preoccupation as most of the *Vedic* gods were forces of nature, such as the sun, the moon, fire, and storm. The Aryan priest-teachers could thus bring blessings from this world through their knowledge and performance of the *Vedic* prayers and rituals.

It is the *Upaniṣads*, however, that are explicit in insisting on the necessity of a guru. It is strikingly clear that education was not an end in itself but a means to the attainment of sacred knowledge or knowledge of the Ultimate Reality. Even the gods and demons must be taught by the guru concerning that Ultimate Reality. In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VII-XII), Indra from the gods and Virochana from the demons go to the renowned teacher Prajāpati in order to learn the essence of reality. Only by knowledge received direct from the guru does one attain this most beneficent Truth (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* IV, 4, 3). So also, in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, the guru is represented as indispensable to the acquisition of knowledge:

Taught by an inferior man He cannot be truly understood, as He is thought of in many ways. Unless taught by one who knows Him as himself, there is no going thither for it is inconceivable, being subtler than the subtle (I, 2, 8).

Further, the *Upaniṣads* repeatedly disapproved of study by oneself, considering it futile. Even self-study of scriptural works cannot give the supreme knowledge. In this context the word “*upaniṣad*” itself supplies an important clue for it literally means “sitting down opposite somebody.” Satyakāma, after having been instructed by fire, bull, swan and bird (that is, by his own observa-

tions) came at last to his guru. The guru marveled at Satyakāma's knowledge and asked who taught him. Satyakāma replied:

Others than men. But I wish, Revered Sir, that you teach me. For I have heard from persons like you, Revered Sir, that the knowledge which has been learned from a teacher best helps one to attain his end (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* IV, 9, 2-3).

Finally, the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (VI, 22) states:

The highest mystery in the Vedānta which has been declared in a former age should not be given to one whose passions are not subdued, nor again to one who is not...a pupil.

The *Upaniṣadic* dialogues with the gurus are clearly didactic (such as the dialogue between the *śiṣya* Nachitekas and the guru Yama in the *Katha Upaniṣad*). They reveal little about the character of the gurus. However, the gurus' methods are clear and varied and they all have a soteriological goal. Varuna, the guardian of cosmic order and overseer of moral action, merely prods his son and *śiṣya* Bhrigu to perform *tapas* (austerities) in order to know *Brahman*. The *śiṣya* is urged to struggle, discover, and experience the Truth which is the “source, stay, and end of the universe” (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* III, 1-6). Guru Yājnayavalkya, instructing his wife Maitreyi, used the *neti-neti* (not this-not that) method. *Brahman* cannot be described in positive terms but when all else is eliminated, *Brahman* remains (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* III, 9, 26). On the other hand, the guru Uddālaka made use of analogies to enable his students to gain insight into Truth and then capped it with the famous expression to his son Śvetaketu, “Tat Tvam Asi” or “That thou art” (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* VI, 13).

It is also in the *Upaniṣads* that divinity and the guru are subtly related. Major extant evidence of the most early activity of the *Vedānta* school are the *Upaniṣads* *Kaṭha*, *Īśa*, *Śvetāśvatara*, and *Muṇḍaka*. The first three are significant because of their theistic theology. They conceived *Brahman* as a personal God, using words such as *Deva*, *Bhagavān*, and *Īśa*. In his *bhakti* (devotion) to *Brahman* it was not uncommon for the *śiṣya* to feel *bhakti* for the guru who himself was considered to have reached emancipation (*Katha Upaniṣad* I, 2, 20-21; I, 2, 7-8) and who therefore was identified with *Brahman*. This is referred to as early as the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*

(VI, 23), about the fourth century B.C.E.: “These subjects which have been declared shine forth to the high-souled one who has the highest devotion for God and for his spiritual teacher (*gurau*) as for God.” Thus, it is the wise *śisya* who has the same *bhakti* for his guru as for God. The relationship between a guru and his *śisya* was one of spiritual reciprocity. The guru provided guidance and knowledge on the spiritual path and the *śisya* reciprocated with obedience and devotion. It thus appears that, much before the medieval *bhakti* period, respect for the guru was evolving into a devotional form similar to that given to God. The guru was to be approached as one approached God.

The *Upaniṣads* record another subtlety: even teachers had to go as disciples to adepts when they sought the Truth by paths other than their own. These teachers no doubt could grasp the other paths intellectually and by themselves; but there was something more important than factual knowledge that had to be absorbed: the existential technique to make that knowledge effective in themselves. The gods related that, “We can give you the knowledge, even knowledge of the *Ātman* but only the teacher can show the Way” (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* IV, 14, 1). Thus, a function of the guru is to intellectually and verbally explain the scripture, its letter and spirit; but he also teaches by his life, daily acts, casual words, silence, overseeing the *śisya*’s health, sleep, diet, the company he keeps, the places he visits.<sup>3</sup> To be near the guru, to humbly and reverently serve and obey him, is to find, to know, and to experience the “Way.”

The first step in being near the guru was for the prospective *śisya* to proffer firewood and alms to his guru. In this act the *śisya* signified a desire to share in the guru’s domestic sacrifice and to accept the duty of helping to maintain it over the several years of his living with the guru and his family.

The relationship between guru and *śisya* was officially inaugurated by a religious ceremony, the *Upanāyana*. The ceremony took three days during which, the *Atharva Veda* (XI, 5, 3) explains, the guru brought the student to a new birth. The *śisya* became *dvija* (twice-born), as the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XI, 5, 4) states. After the initiation the stipulated duration of studentship with the guru was twelve years. However, the completion of this period with intense

*Vedic* study probably remained an ideal followed most often by a few select *Brāhmans*.

The formal method of teaching included a dialectical approach whereby the student asked questions and the teacher discoursed upon them. There was, however, more to the method than simply asking and listening. There was the insistence, as the *śisya* advanced, on contemplating the truth and realizing or activating it in one's life. The responsibility of spiritual growth, therefore, ultimately devolved on the *śisya* and not on the guru. R. K. Mookerji relates the following:

The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* clearly states that education in the highest knowledge depends upon three processes following one another... *Sravana* is listening to what is taught by the teacher... *Manana* is defined as constant contemplation of the One Reality in accordance with the ways of reasoning aiding in its apprehension. *Nididhyasana* is concentrated contemplation of the truth so as to realize it.<sup>4</sup>

All three steps are activities of the *śisya* and all necessitate a great deal of self-discipline.

Further, the period of studentship was not only a time of learning and of vigorous discipline but also of humble service to the guru. The *śisya* had to attend to the guru's sacred fire (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* IV, 10, 1) look after his cattle (ibid., IV, 4, 5), collect alms for him (ibid., IV, 3, 5), and await his every command (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* III, 1, 2).

### *The Guru in The Dharma Śāstras*

In treating education, the *Śāstra of Manu* (II, 140-141) distinguished two types of teacher:

- 1) *Upādhyāya* who taught only a portion of the *Veda* and who taught for his livelihood;
- 2) the *ācārya* who invested the student with the sacred thread, taught the *Veda* with its *Kalpasutras* (concerning sacrifices) and the *Upaniṣads*, and who taught free.

(It is well to note the equation of *ācārya* and guru at this point. According to Jogendranath Bhattacharya the “word *Guru* and *Acarya* originally meant a teacher of the *Vedas*.’’) <sup>5</sup> The *śisya* who completed his education with the *ācārya* or guru could give “gifts” but not a “payment” to his teacher: a field, gold, cows, horses, umbrella, shoes, grain, vegetables, clothes (II, 246). But, according

to *Manu* (III, 156), the “paid” teacher and “paying” student were unqualified to participate in *Śrauta* rites.<sup>6</sup> The qualities of sacrifice, devotion and disinterested approach to material wealth seem to have been essential elements of guru behavior.

*Manu* also states:

The pupil must know that that man also who benefits him by instruction in the *Veda*, be it little or much, is called in these writings his Guru, in consequence of that benefit conferred by instruction in the *Veda* (II, 149).

That “benefit conferred by instruction in the *Veda*” was delineated in *Manu* as follows:

Of him who gives natural birth and him who gives the knowledge of the *Veda*, the giver of the *Veda* is the more venerable father; for the birth for the sake of the *Veda* ensures eternal rewards both in this life and after death (II, 146).

The *ācārya* then is ten times more venerable than the *upādhyāya* (*Manu* II, 145). He is chief among all gurus (*Gautama Śāstra* II, 50) and in a significant passage in the *Vishnu Dharma Śāstra*, he is called an *atiguru* (an especially venerable teacher):

A man has three *Atigurus*:  
His father, his mother, and his spiritual teacher.  
To them he must always pay obedience.  
What they say, that he must do...  
By honouring his mother, he gains the world,  
by honouring his father, the world of gods;  
and by paying strict obedience to his spiritual  
teacher, the world of *Brahman* (XXXI, 1-4, 10).

No doubt the guru was linked with the parents partly because of his intimacy and his approach to the *śisya*, that is, the guru was expected to expound the texts of scripture and live them in an attractive, lucid, patient and kind manner (*Manu* II, 159-161). In effect, the relation between the guru and his *śisya* was to be of a parental character (*Manu* II, 171).

In *Vishnu* (XXXII, 1-2) and *Manu* (II, 227-37) the *ācārya*, the father, and the mother are described as the three highest gurus and as such deserve the utmost reverence. But the *Āpastamba* treatise went further; namely, the pupil was to look upon the teacher as God: “Alms are declared to be sacrificial food. In regard to them the teacher holds the position which a deity holds in regard to food offered at a sacrifice” (I, 1, 3, 42). The *Āpastamba* also states: “He (the *śisya*) shall approach his teacher with the same reverence as a

deity, without telling idle stories, attentive and listening eagerly to his words" (I, 2, 6, 13).

Reverence, it was assumed, naturally gave way to service. Serving the guru was one of the requisites for attaining "supreme bliss":

Studying the *Veda*, practicing austerities, the acquisition of true knowledge, the subjugation of the organs, abstention from doing injury and serving the *Guru* are the best means for attaining supreme bliss (*Manu* XII, 83).

Prime services which the *śisya* performed for his guru were fetching water, collecting fuel, sweeping the area around the sacred fire and begging for food (*Āpastamba* I, 1, 1-7).

*Manu* (II, 69ff.) spells out elaborate rules for the *śisya*'s proper behavior toward the guru whom he serves. The *śisya* must not pronounce his guru's name without an honorific title (*Manu* II, 199). "And whenever people justly censure or falsely defame his teacher, then he must cover his ears or depart thence to another place" (*Manu* II, 200). Immediately following this verse, it is stated that the *śisya* who even justly censures or defames his guru will be born in a lower plane of existence in his next birth. The *śisya* must be cognizant not only of speech but also of his actions in the presence of the guru:

In the presence of his teacher he shall not void excrements, discharge wind, speak aloud, laugh, spit, clean his teeth, blow his nose, frown, clap his hands, nor snap his fingers" (*Āpastamba* II, 2, 5, 9-10).

*Manu* (IV, 162) states: "Let him never offend the teacher who initiated him, nor him who explained the *Veda*..." Possibly the greatest offense (*mahāpāptaka*) against the guru is to "violate the guru's bed" (*Manu* IX, 235). The relationship with the guru and his family was considered so intimate that to have intercourse with the guru's wife was equivalent to incest.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the *Dharma Śāstras* elaborated and legislated on the principal virtues to be directed toward the guru: obedience and propriety.

### *The Guru In The Epic Literature*

It is a presupposition in the *Epics* that both human and divine beings need the guru. The celestial beings have Bṛhiṣpati as their guru; he is their chief offerer of prayers and sacrifices and their counselor (*Rāmāyaṇa* II, 1, 24; II, 4, 22; IV, 54, 4). Even

Lord Rāma and Lord Krishna, the very incarnations of Viṣṇu, had to bow down before their gurus. Viśvāmitra was a mentor of Rāma. In his early years, however, Viśvāmitra was a warrior and conqueror; but through vigorous austerities, he transformed himself into a saint and guru. Daśaratha, the father of Rāma, magnanimously greeted that guru-saint with these words:

I heartily welcome you. Blest, indeed, with fruit is my life today. I have not lived in vain. Your visit has washed all my sins away and has made this a holy place... O honoured sage, doubt me not: I shall be happy to do whatever by your will, for you are verily a god to me.<sup>8</sup>

In the *Rāmāyana*, the stature of the guru is further attested to when, in the search for Sītā, Hanumān is exhorted to leap as the “hero-son of Desarin and Vayu, by grace of the seers and gurus and consent of the elder apes” (*Rāmāyana* IV, 67, 34). Searching for Sītā, Rāma encountered a female ascetic of the jungle tribes who was greatly devoted to him. In his patient generosity Rāma described nine kinds of *bhakti* to her. The third kind was humble service to the guru. This is significant for Rāma does not elaborate simply *Vedic* sacrifice or *Upaniṣadic* philosophy but *bhakti*. Rāma concluded his explanation with these words:

Whoever has one kind of devotion out of all these, whether man or woman, a movable or immovable being, know him or her... to be dearly loved by me (*Aranyakanda* XXXV, 4).

A similar list and a full description of *bhakti* is found in the third book of the *Rāmāyana*, where Rāma is questioned concerning the difference between God and soul. Troy Organ has analyzed that conversation:

Rāma begins by confirming that knowledge according to the *Vedas* is the means to salvation, but he says there is a more excellent way, the way of *bhakti*. *Bhakti* is independent of knowledge. It involves using the senses for the enrichment of attitudes toward the deity.<sup>9</sup>

Rāma again listed the nine elements of *bhakti* which include devotion to the guru. Significant here is the shift of attitude in religious education and religious experience. It is away from the *Brāhmanical* preserve of *Vedic* memorization and study to a more popular religiosity which enhanced the importance of the teacher to the lessening of the immediate importance of the priest, scripture, and even the gods.

The *Mahābhārata* contains stories of *śiṣyas* who distinguished themselves by exemplary devotion to their gurus, for example, Upanmanyu and Aruni, pupils of Dhaumya. In the *Mahābhārata*'s *Santi-Parva* (containing Bhīṣma's Great Discourse), the greatest of all virtues is delineated as respect for father, mother, and guru. Chapter IV of the *Sanatsugātiya* section of the *Mahābhārata* states:

But the birth obtained from the preceptor (guru), that verily is true, and likewise immortal. He perfects (one), giving (one) immortality. Recognizing what he has done (for one), one should not injure him. The disciple should always make obeisance to the preceptor; and, free from heedlessness, should always desire sacred instruction.

The god Gaṇeśa, averter of obstacles and giver of boons, grants Gaya the power to know the *Vedas* without study, simply as Gaya begs, through “austerity, chastity, observances, vows, and the grace of the Gurus” (*Mahābhārata*, VII, 55, 2ff.).

The *Bhagavad Gītā*, asserts that *bhakti* is the worship and devotion shown to *bhagavān*. Lord Krishna entered the world for very specific reasons as he himself stated in the *Gītā* (IV, 8): “For the salvation of those who are good, for the destruction of evil in men, for the fulfillment of the kingdom of righteousness, I come to this world in the ages that pass.” Krishna introduced the important concept of God's entry into the world as a beneficent savior. It is *bhakti* directed toward this savior that is the prime means of salvation, as Lord Krishna himself stated:

Even if the greatest sinner worships me with all his soul, he must be considered righteous, because of his righteous will.

Give me thy mind and give me thy heart, give me thy offerings and thy adoration; and thus with thy soul in harmony, and making me thy goal supreme, thou shalt in truth come to me (IX, 30, 34).

*Bhakti*, however, can also be the attitude which a disciple-devotee shows to his guru as the personal and immediate manifestation of the deity. In the *Gītā*, Krishna is both Lord and *guru* (XVIII, 75); and even as divine guru he points to human teachers: “Those who themselves have seen the Truth can be thy teachers of wisdom. Ask from them, bow unto them, be unto them a servant” (IV, 34).

It is well to note here that in the *Epic* literature the human personality holds the center of interest and the purely divine element is subsidiary. The *Vedic Samhitas* praise and propitiate the gods; major portions of the *Upaniṣads* extol and delineate the all-pervading,

formless *Brahman*. On the other hand, the *Epics* are homocentric. They speak of men and their greatness and of gods who have taken human form (*avatāra*) and who, in fact, are often servants of men. Though incarnations of the Lord, Rāma and Krishna are portrayed as more human than divine. This humanizing tendency was continued in the *Purāṇas*, and had important repercussions for the understanding of the guru.

### *The Guru In The Purāṇas*

A distinctive element of the *Purāṇic* age was the rigorous identification of Ultimate Reality not as an amorphous being but as possessing the attributes of recognizable personality. In the *Purāṇic* age, it was theistic and humanistic personality which permeated Hindu consciousness, finding expression in art, architecture, sculpture, poetry, and the everyday religious life of the people. Associated with the *Vaiṣṇavite Purāṇas* (e.g., *Viṣṇu, Padma, Bhāgavata*) is the doctrine of the *avatāra*, divine incarnations in animal forms or human beings, such as Krishna and Rāma. A facet of this doctrine's import was that religion was directed not to a nature god or amorphous being but to a human-like personality.

The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* presents the divine-human personality, Krishna, in several different human relationships: son to father with Nanda, child to mother with Yaśoda, friend to friend with the cowherds, beloved to lovers with the *gopīs*. These various personal relationships, with their respective human emotions (reverence, affection, kindness, passionate love), eventually were understood as modes of devotion to God. In effect, human emotions were being transformed into means of religious devotion thereby making salvation more readily accessible. Salvation could not be confined to persons of high birth alone if devotion was the prime qualification. Human relationships and human emotions were recognized as inherent, worthwhile goods. This attitude enhanced that obedience, propriety, and devotion already directed to the guru. The guru thus grew in stature in the *Purāṇas*. According to R. C. Hazra,

The *Brhannāradīya-purāṇa* says that there is no truth (*tattva*) higher than the preceptor [the guru]. This high idea about the preceptor is perhaps one of the reasons why he is found to play an important part in the *Purāṇic* religious rites.<sup>10</sup>

Chapter nine of the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, which takes the form of a dialogue between the guru Parāśara and his *śiṣya* Maitreya, contains instructions for the student of a guru which are similar to those prescribed by *Manu* (e.g. II, 175ff.):

When the youth has been invested with the thread of his caste, let him diligently prosecute the study of the *Vedas*, in the house of his preceptor... He is to wait upon his Guru... He must stand when his master is standing; move when he is walking; and sit beneath him when he is seated...

In the *Padma Purāṇa*, stories are related about proper attitudes toward parents and gurus to show how one can attain pleasures in this life and the next by serving them. Those, however, who defile those relationships are punished; the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* (XIV, 43-45) states:

Those who have blasphemed the *Veda*, the gods, the twice-born and their Guru; for so many years these very terrible birds with adamant beaks tear out the very tongues of those men as they are continually renewed.

In the comparatively late portions of the *Purāṇas*, the devotional attitude toward the personal deity is shared by the guru. Even more, the guru is often identified with the highest deity of the sect. In the *Varāha Purāṇa* (IC) a devotee willing to have *dīksā* (initiation) is to identify his guru with Viṣṇu and honor the spiritual preceptor accordingly. Similarly, the *Bhagavata Purāṇa* teaches that the guru is to be regarded as the deity (XI, 3) and worshipped (X, 86), for *mokṣa* (liberation) is attained only under the guidance of a guru. This guru, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* counsels, must know the *Vedas* well, worship Krishna (XI, 3, 21), and be in control of all passions (XI, 10, 5).

### *The Guru In The Tantras*

Many of the *Tantric* practices (*yogic*, *mantric*, *yantric* [ritual diagrammatization]) are secret, complex, and esoteric, thus necessitating the guidance of the *guru*. Dasgupta has observed:

Because of their stringent nature these practices have repeatedly been declared in all the *Tantras* as the secret of all secrets (guhyād guhyam), and therefore, there is no other way of being initiated into this method of yoga save the practical help of the *guru*.<sup>11</sup>

The *Tantric* guru taught any who sincerely desired the path, regardless of caste. The *Tantric* guru himself was not bound by

heredity or caste. If he has mastered the path, if he as *jīvanmukta* (living, liberated person) had ascended to the experience of union with Ultimate Reality, he could then teach. Religious authority was significantly shifting from orthodox *Brāhmans* who knew the *Vedas* to the guru whose devotion and knowledge of *Tantra* led him to liberation. Intellectual knowledge or hereditary status alone were not of prime importance.

In the *Kulārṇava Tantra*, as expounded by M. P. Pandit,<sup>12</sup> there is a six-fold classification of the *Tantric* guru: *preraka*, who stimulates interest in *sādhana*, the method of spiritual practice, by drawing attention to its beneficent results; *sūcaka*, who opens the eye of the seeker to the *sādhana* and its objective; *vācaka*, who explains the method and the goal; *darśaka*, who shows them in convincing detail; *sikṣaka*, who teaches step by step the discipline and details of the ritual; and finally the *bodhaka*, who endows the aspirant with the necessary understanding of mind and illuminates his being with his own spiritual light. The *Tantras* thus lay great emphasis on the developed and mastered abilities of the guru. The *Śāradātilaka Tantra* delineates further qualifications of the *Tantric* guru:

The guru must know the essence of all *āgamas* and the principles and meaning of all *Sāstras*, he must be one whose words come out true, who has a quiet mind, who has profoundly studied the *Veda* and its meaning, who follows the path of *Yoga* and whose bearing is beneficent as that of a deity (II, 142-144).

The *Tantric* *sādhana* may entail *dhyāna*, *pūjā*, or *mantrajapa*, but it is the guru who initiates, conducts, and leads to fruition. His personality permeates the *sādhana* as the *Kulārṇava Tantra* (X, 13) states:

The form of the guru is the root of *dhyāna*, the lotus feet of the guru is the root of *pūjā*, the word of the guru is the root of *mantra*, and the grace of the guru is the root of *siddhi* [supernatural power].

The *Tantric* guru is not just a learned man who can teach; he has attained and is the Highest Reality. According to Dasgupta, “In almost all the *Tantras* the Guru is always praised in superlative terms and is declared to be the highest reality itself.”<sup>13</sup> In the *Tantras* the guru is the epitome of the most important persons in one’s life: “Guru is the father, Guru is the mother, Guru is God...himself” (*Kularṇava Tantra* XII, 49). An interesting commentary on this verse elaborates:

The Guru is the mother who carries the seeker in the womb of his consciousness before he gives him birth into the life of the Spirit. The Guru is the father who tends to the growth and welfare of the initiate in the difficult Path. The Guru embodies the Lord for it is through the person of the Guru that He manifests Himself to the discipline and reaches to him His saving Grace.<sup>14</sup>

John Woodroffe has written:

The *Tantra Śāstras* are full of the greatness of the Guru. He is not to be thought of as a mere man... Guru, it is said, can save one from the wrath of Śiva, but in no way can one be saved from the wrath of the Guru.<sup>15</sup>

The *Tantric* guru, then, has extraordinary power. He is not just the human personality that bears the title of guru. The *Rudra Yāmala* states:

There is only one auspicious guru and he is certainly Myself. He is to be contemplated, at times, in the thousand-petalled lotus, at times, in the heart-lotus, and at other times, as present before the eye (in human form).<sup>16</sup>

### *The Guru In The Bhakti Tradition*

A concise and systematic account of the direction of *bhakti* theology can be found in the *Nārada Bhakti Sūtras* where *bhakti* is primarily delineated as affection and submission. These qualities mark the intimate association which is to be developed with *Bhagavān* and also with those men who are totally devoted to *Bhagavān*, for “between God and His men there is no difference.” In these *sūtras* it is stated:

The association of the great souls (*mahātman*) is hard to acquire, hard to be had completely, but is always fruitful. For gaining even that association, one requires God’s blessings; for between God and His men there is no difference.<sup>17</sup>

The cult of devotion was bringing in a new kind of teacher in place of the older *Vedic* teacher. The guru was being revered not because of academic knowledge or birth but because of his individual, inspirational qualities, rooted in his own personal devotion to and realization of the Lord. It is well to note that the ascendancy of both *bhakti* and the guru occurred during the Hindu revival of the seventh century C.E., after the period of Buddhist prominence. This is significant, for according to Pratima Kale:

The Buddhist and Jain doctrines, which emphasized the messianic powers of persons...helped create a cult of personality around this spiritual, mystical Guru whom the devotee enshrined as a personal prophet and mentor.<sup>18</sup>

The eventual foreign domination of India by Islam further shattered the power of the upper castes and subsequently gave impetus to the development of this newer form of guru.

### *The Guru In The Bhakti Philosophers*

It was reaction to the radical idealism of Śaṅkara (788-820 C.E.) which gave definitive momentum to the *bhakti* movement. Śaṅkara did place emphasis on the importance of the guru.<sup>19</sup> However, the context of *jñāna* and *Advaita Vedānta* in which he situated the guru was highly intellectual and did not evoke a response in the popular mind. In reaction to the intellectual thrust of Śaṅkara, other philosophers of the medieval age stressed *bhakti*. An early, prominent exponent of a philosophical basis for the *bhakti* movement was the *Vaiṣṇavite* teacher Rāmānuja who lived in the early years of the twelfth century. Educated first in Śaṅkara's *Advaitic* tradition, Rāmānuja soon fell out with his teacher Yadavaprakāśa, a militant *Advaitin*. In his reaction against *Advaita*, Rāmānuja taught that liberation was attained mainly through *bhakti*. He maintained that intense devotion would purify the mind of disbelief, open the individual to divine grace and thereby relieve the individual of sorrow. The individual could thereby reunite with *Brahman* but within that totality retain his own differentiation. Further, Rāmānuja democratized this position when he taught that even the *Sūdra* and the outcaste could attain salvation by complete surrender to the will of the guru.<sup>20</sup> As a metaphysician, Rāmānuja achieved a synthesis of the *bhakti* tradition with *Vedānta* and also provided a rational basis for Hindu devotionalism. Ultimately, this development had a great effect on guruhood since the guru often became the focus for that intense and saving devotion which Rāmānuja prescribed.

Nimbārka (eleventh century) was also a philosophical leader of the *bhakti* movement. Nimbārka determined that there are five basic *sādhanas* or paths to salvation: *karma*, *jñāna*, *upāsanā* or meditation, *prapatti* or self-surrender to God, and *gurūpāsatti* or devotion to the guru. In *gurūpāsatti* the guru leads the devotee to God; and whatever is necessary for salvation is done for the devotee by the guru. A follower of Nimbārka, Sundarabhatta, describes *gurūpāsatti* as the

best *sādhana*, uniting *karma*, *jñāna*, and *bhakti*: obeying the guru's precepts is *karma yoga*; knowing that the essence of one's self is the guru is *jñāna yoga*; being devoted to the guru is *bhakti yoga*.<sup>21</sup>

In the seventeenth century, Rāmadāsa wrote in the *Dasabodha* on the absolute necessity of a guru:

Without a Guru we can never attain to real knowledge... Even though one may study the sciences and attain to all kind of powers, both physical and mental, without the grace of the Guru one cannot realise the Self. Contemplation and concentration, devotion and worship, would be all useless without the grace of the Guru... Rama and Krishna, and all the Saints and Sages of by-gone times, devoted themselves wholly to the service of their Master (*Dasabodha* V, 1, 19-43).

In the same treatise, Rāmadāsa described the true guru:

He alone can be called a Guru who has no desires left in him, and whose determination is as steady as a mountain... He must have extreme dispassion, and his actions should be beyond censure. With him, spiritual discussion must be a constant pastime. He uplifts the world and becomes an exemplar for the various kinds of *Bhakti*... Knowledge, dispassionateness, devotion, rightful conduct, *Sādhana*, spiritual discussion, meditation, morality, justice, and the observation of the mean constitute the chief characteristics of a Guru (V, 2, 44-53).

Rāmadāsa's admiration for the guru was so great that he considered the true guru greater than God:

He who regards God as superior to the Guru is a fool... Before the greatness of the Guru, the greatness of God is as nothing... God is made God by men by the power of *Mantras*; but the Guru cannot be made even by God. The power of God is the power of illusion; the power of the Guru carries everything before it (V, 3, 40-46).

Thus, these *bhakti* philosophers attempted to provide a rational basis for their devotionalism vis-à-vis the challenge of Śaṅkara. In so doing, they gave a pivotal role to the guru in spiritual development. It was, however, the *bhakti* poets or minstrels who would instill a popular fervor for *bhakti* and for the guru.

### *The Guru In the Bhakti Poets*

The Muslim Kabīr was born near the Hindu holy city of Benares about 1440. He was influenced by both Islam and Hinduism, claimed by both, and was a powerful influence in the formation of Sikhism. Kabīr described the obstacle-laden river of life across which only a spiritual teacher, the guru, can safely carry man; in

fact to see such a true spiritual teacher is to see God.<sup>22</sup> He maintained that it is the guru's favor which frees from heaven and hell; those who do not honor the guru will simply fall into constant rebirths.<sup>23</sup> Kabīr expressed himself in a non-philosophical way through devotional poems and hymns. He was only one in a long line of poets, minstrels, and saints to do so. Though of various times and places, they all stressed the centrality of the guru.

A vigorous tradition of *bhakti* was established in the Maratha region by the *Vaiṣṇava* poets. The thirteenth century poet Jñāneśvara experienced and elaborated on the tri-dimensional oneness of himself, his guru, and God. He rhetorically asked, "God, His devotee, and the Guru are united together, as three rivers merge into a confluence; when everything becomes God, how is one to worship Him?"<sup>24</sup> In the *Jñāneśvarī*, a commentary on the *Bhagavad Gītā*, Jñāneśvara extolled the guru as the complete focus of the devotee's attention:

When the sun of illumination has arisen, he [the devotee] fills the basket of his intellect with the innumerable flowers of emotion, and worships the Guru with them...he burns the incense of his egoism and waves lights of illumination before his Guru... In short, he makes himself the worshipper, and his Guru the object of worship (XIII, 385-90).

The result of this guru-worship is complete fulfillment:

As when a tree is watered at the bottom, it goes out to the branches and the foliage; as when a man has taken a bath in the sea, he may be said to have bathed in all the holy waters of the world; as when nectar has once been enjoyed, all the flavours are forthwith enjoyed; similarly, when the Guru has been worshipped, all the desires become fulfilled (I, 25-27).

The author's love for his own guru was profound. He devoted the second chapter of another work, the *Amritanubhava*, to a description of his guru Nivritti's grace. The grace of Nivritti is like the sun for in its presence the darkness of ignorance vanishes and the day of self-realization begins. His grace is like water which so purifies the devotee that even Śiva should not touch the *śiṣya* (II, 14).

### *The Guru In The Bhakti Cults*

Great reverence through elaborate imperatives was paid to the guru in the *Brāhmanism* of antiquity. The *śiṣya* owed him perfect obedience during the *āśrama* of the *Brahmacārin* and pious remembrance always; but he owed the guru nothing further. However, the

continuing historical development of the *guru-siṣya* relationship saw an exaltation of the guru to such a degree that he was worshipped by the *siṣya*.

Guru deification and worship received great impetus from at least the seventh century C.E. within the major *bhakti* sects, *Vaiṣṇavite* and *Śaivite*. In the path of devotional faith in a personalized deity, increasing emphasis was placed on the role of the guru-founder of the various cults within these two major sects. He was assuming, at the very least, the phenomenal role of the personal deity, replacing the great *avatāras* as the vital center of the cults, and being hailed as a deity fit for worship.<sup>25</sup> According to Jan Gonda,

The followers of Caitanya eventually exalted their master to such a degree that he almost eclipses Krishna, and the Sivaite Lingāyats feel higher respect for their guru than for Śiva himself because the former leads the soul to God.<sup>26</sup>

Vaiṣṇavism first appeared as a religious reform, like Jainism and Buddhism, but based on theistic principles. A distinguishing characteristic of the fifteenth century Vaiṣṇavite sect of Vallabha was the exalted position of the guru: Guru Vallabha and his descendants who headed the movement were themselves considered incarnations of Krishna. The cult was especially partial to the adolescent Krishna whose amorous companionship with the *gopīs* and Rādhā is the theme of the tenth chapter of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. A high spiritual effort was to join in the *līlā* of Krishna and Rādhā through intercourse with the guru.

About the same time, Caitanya (1485-1533) promulgated the worship of the adult Krishna. In this particular Vaiṣṇavite cult, Krishna as supreme being reveals himself through three modes: direct inspiration, the scriptures, and the guru. The guru, therefore, is invested with the highest honor because he is the ordinary means of grace. But he is even more than this. The guru is the very self of Krishna, showing kindness to his devotee in the form of the spiritual teacher. A commentator in the late 1800s writing about the Vaiṣṇavites of Bengal and in particular the Caitanya cult observed the following:

Of all obligations, however, the *guru padasraya*, or servile veneration of the spiritual teacher, is the most important and compulsory. The members of this sect was not only required to deliver up themselves and everything valuable to the disposal of the guru, they are not only to entertain full belief in the usual

Vaishnava tenet, which identifies the votary, the teacher, and the god, but they are to look upon the guru as one and the present deity, as possessed of more authority even than the deity, and as one whose favour is more to be courted and whose anger is more to be deprecated than even that of Krishna himself.<sup>27</sup>

By the middle of the twelfth century, the reformer Vasava was breathing new life into Śaivism, particularly by freeing it from the caste system. This regenerated, revolutionary Śaivism was called Vīraśaivism (heroic or stalwart Śaivism). Within Vīraśaivism, *astravarana* signifies the eight shields which put the devotee in tune with the Infinite and thus protect and lead him to beatitude. The eight shields are the guru, *linga* (phallic symbol given by the guru at birth), *jangama* (itinerant *jīvanmukta*), *pādodaka* (water sanctified by contact with the guru), *prasāda* (food so sanctified), *bhasma* (sacred ashes), *rudrāksa* (rosary), and *mantra*. The guru is given first place among the *astravarana*; for the guru is the realized one who initiates the novice in the Vīraśaiva faith and guides him in the use of the *astravarana*. The guru has gained experiential knowledge of God and His world and the Vīraśaivite finds satisfaction in serving and imitating the guru and thereby acquiring knowledge from him. A twentieth century Vīraśaivite scholar has stated that the guru “is considered to be worthy of more reverence than is due to Śiva, the Supreme, because it is he who leads the soul to unity with Śiva.”<sup>28</sup>

Jan Gonda has written:

All religious schools are agreed that the one who has the authority to initiate others is the qualified guru...whom Saivas as well as Vaisnavas often regard as representing God himself.<sup>29</sup>

It was the bhakti cults, then, which gave a decisive impetus to the divinity concept and consequent worship of the guru. Spencer observes:

Being himself one with God, the guru was worshipped as God, and such worship was regarded as a means of union. Images of the chief gurus were erected in the great temples. Devotion to the guru was placed on an equal footing with devotion to God.<sup>30</sup>

This devotion to and worship of the guru was and is similar to that of a deity worshipped in a temple. Disciples burn incense before the guru, prostrate before him, present him offerings, drink water in which his feet have been washed, and take betel chewed by the guru as *prasādam*. A devotional book published at the turn of this

century, entitled *The Daily Practices of the Hindus*, epitomizes this reverence: “In the morning let him [the disciple] remember his guru, utter his name, and think of him... There is no higher object of veneration and homage for man than his *gurudeva*.<sup>31</sup>”<sup>31</sup>

### *The Guru and Contemporary Trends*

In modern times, it was the advent of Rāmakrishna (1836-1886) and his followers which brought much positive attention to the guru not only in India but also in the West. Rāmakrishna was the outstanding Hindu saint of the nineteenth century and considered by some to be an *avatāra*. Born Gadadhar Chatterji, a Bengali *Brāhman*, he showed an ecumenically sensitive religious spirit throughout his life. Having developed a high level of spirituality, Rāmakrishna was a guru for the many people who came to consult him. Some Indian commentators feel his relation with his *śiṣyas* was unique:

He did not rule them like the traditional gurus with the rod of iron, nor did he believe in thrusting doctrines or dogmas into their young minds. He was all love and compassion... He led each one of them by the hand along the path best suited to his taste, temperament, and capacity.

Rāmakrishna’s manner was full of a joyful vivaciousness:

The melancholy air of the stoic was not to touch their [his disciples] tender minds. He would rather strive to keep up the lustre and buoyancy of these young souls by humouring them occasionally with endearing words, interesting parables, and witty remarks, and sometimes by making them roar with laughter by his marvellous mimicry of worldly men and women in a variety of funny poses.

His method of instruction was to insist on experiencing, not merely accumulating knowledge:

Instead of burdening their minds with dogmas or fettering their feet with a fixed code of rituals, he urged them simply to verify the truths mentioned in the *Śastras* by their own experiment and observation... Instead of allowing them to indulge in vain controversies about metaphysical and theological themes, he would stir up in their hearts, by his very presence as well as by his pointed and emphatic words, an intense yearning for realizing God.<sup>32</sup>

Concerning the role of the guru, Rāmakrishna himself stated: “He [the guru] brings man and God together, even as a match-maker brings together the lover and the beloved.”<sup>33</sup> In another place he related the following:

At the time of meditation the guru appears before the disciple in vision; he points to the disciple's Chosen Ideal and says, "Look, there is your Chosen Ideal." Then he himself merges into the form of the Chosen Ideal.<sup>34</sup>

During the last six years of his life an organized group of disciples formed around Rāmakrishna. It was led by a young law student, Vivekānanda (1863-1902) who became Rāmakrishna's successor. A brilliant speaker and organizer, Vivekānanda founded the Rāmakrishna Movement and spread it worldwide. Vivekānanda urged:

The guru must be worshipped as God. He is God, he is nothing less than that. As you look at him, gradually the guru melts away, and what is left? The guru picture gives place to God Himself. The guru is the bright mask which God wears in order to come to us. As we look steadily on, gradually the mask falls off and God is revealed.<sup>35</sup>

A dramatic development in Hinduism and guruhood came about particularly through the endeavors of Vivekānanda. In order to appreciate this development, the complexity of traditional Hinduism must be understood: it was a fusion between an organization of social life on a horizontal plane and paths to liberation or beatitude on the vertical. In the last century, those paths were to some degree extricated from the social organization of life; that is, seekers from outside the Hindu community more readily received spiritual guidance from its gurus without the necessity of integrating themselves into the Hindu social community. Vivekānanda was most instrumental in aiding this development with the Vedānta Societies he founded in the West. He came to Chicago in 1893 to attend the worldwide Parliament of Religions and he stayed and lectured in the United States until 1896. He organized Vedānta Societies in New York, San Francisco, and London. This acceptance of foreign disciples without their integration into the Hindu social fabric is a continuing and developing practice with Hindu gurus.

Another important contemporary guru was Swami Sivananda (1887-1962). A passion for service drew him into a medical career. At the height of that career he renounced his wealth, home, and position to become a wandering mendicant and finally a *sannyāsi*. He spent several years in the solitude of the Himalayan jungles. Then in 1936 he founded the Divine Life Society to disseminate spiritual knowledge in India and throughout the world. True to the

Hindu tradition, Sivananda recognized the importance of the guru: “No doubt, the Guru’s blessing can do everything.”<sup>36</sup> With his background in medicine, Sivananda wrote allegorically on the necessity of the guru:

There is however the illusion which covers the eye of the Self, on account of which it directs itself to externality. Here a guru is required, who applies the collyrium of *Jñāna* to the aspirant, and his internal eye is opened. Without the guru you cannot do this.<sup>37</sup>

The guru, however, is not simply a man of knowledge or a miracle-worker but a man of profound and subtle experience and depth. Sivananda explained:

Mere study of books cannot make one a Guru. One who has studied the *Vedas*, and who has direct knowledge of the *Ātman* through *Anubhava* (experience), can alone be enrolled as a Guru.<sup>38</sup>

For Sivananda, the true guru is more than a mere man: “The Guru is God Himself manifesting in a personal form to guide the aspirant.”<sup>39</sup>

One of the several outstanding *śisyas* of Sivananda and a guru himself is Swami Satchidananda. Born in 1914, the son of a wealthy landowner, Satchidananda pursued a successful business career. He renounced that life after the death of his wife, made pilgrimage throughout the East for many years, and in 1949 was initiated as a *sannyāsi* by Sivananda. Since then, Satchidananda has been a guru for many in the East and the West. Concerning the guru’s role, he frankly affirms:

In the East, the major forms by which you worship the Lord are divided into six sections. The highest of all is the worship of the guru... It is very difficult to worship the guru. There is ample opportunity to lose faith in him, while there is nothing to make you lose faith in a picture, a form, a statue of a god. When you adore a living person, he is not the same always.<sup>40</sup>

Another significant, contemporary guru is Muktananda (1908-), particularly well known and venerated in India. In a book entitled *Guru*, Muktananda has written:

On the one hand, he [the guru] is adept in spiritual matters, and, on the other, he is exceedingly shrewd in his worldly dealings. Those aspirants who live under the protection of such a Master pass through acute crises with ease and meet the most unfavorable circumstances fearlessly.<sup>41</sup>

Speaking literally, his devotees claim Muktananda is Brahmā in that he creates for them a new and wondrous world; he is Viṣṇu

because he sustains and protects them in their divine life; he is Śiva because he annihilates their world of limited individuality.<sup>42</sup>

Gurus can be completely selfless, desiring nothing for themselves or they can be avaricious, seeking only an easy livelihood off the naive or guilt-ridden—they use the *śiṣyas*. On the other hand, the *śiṣya* can also use the guru for reasons other than spiritual development. Because of impinging external forces, the tribes of India, outside the traditional Hindu caste system, are undergoing significant change. Many tribes are now shifting toward *jāti* characteristics. So, for example, the headman of a tribal village (the Konds) in Orissa has taken as a spiritual advisor a Hindu guru with the hope of learning how to behave like a Hindu and thereby to deal more effectively with government officials. The headman is aware that if he can take on certain non-tribal, *jāti* (Hindu class) manners, he and his people will have a more ready access to political benefits. He listens to and pays for the guru's counsel not only for religious reasons but primarily because he sees the guru as a means to modern forms of political power.<sup>43</sup> This particular use of gurus is not new, observes Mandelbaum:

For centuries ambitious tribal chieftains have taken Hindu mentors in order to gain more durable power by learning to be proper *Kshatriyas*. This older tutelage was mainly intended to enhance the rule of the tribal chieftain over his own people; now, however, even a village headman seeks guidance from a Hindu preceptor, not only to solidify his own power but also to exploit the power newly available through political democracy.<sup>44</sup>

Although the Bhūmij, a tribe of Bengal, has taken on Vaiṣṇavite gurus, the tribe maintains most of its own rituals such as festivals in honor of local village gods and goddesses. However, association with the gurus and acceptance of some of their ritual traits conveys a certain element of respectability in their dealings with non-tribal, Hindu society. "The Bhūmij look upon a ritual association with the Vaisnavas as a means of attaining prestige in the eyes of the Bengali upper castes in the area," writes Milton Singer.<sup>45</sup> Such examples of the tribal use of Hindu gurus for social acceptance, mobility, and power are being rapidly recorded by contemporary sociologists.

Just as the guru is a means for some Indian tribes to enter the sphere of *jāti*, the guru can also be a means for exiting from *jāti* influence. This is particularly true for those Indians who have come

under the influence of Western education and culture and who consider caste with its attendant ritual and pollution concerns as embarrassing and socially backward. A guru for this type of Hindu, maintains Mandelbaum, is often a *sannyāsi* who is

...expected to cut off his secular attachments, to abandon all considerations of kinship, *jāti*, and village. Hence...he is likely to pass lightly over such matters or to brush them aside entirely as inconsequential and positively harmful to the spirit.<sup>46</sup>

By entering the world of the spirit with the guru some Hindus seek a sense of individual wholeness free from external societal restraints. Richard Lannoy has written:

Under the conditions of a caste society, hierarchical interdependence and ritualistic interpersonal relations introduce into every relationship an element of formal and emotional constraint. The only authentic meeting that can still occur between two human beings stripped of their masks, is within the initiatory magic circle of the *guru-sishya* relationship.<sup>47</sup>

Thus, the guru and his disciples often form an alternative social hierarchy outside caste and class, outside inherited social limits, which provides not an entry into but an exit from traditional Hindu society.

Further, religion for the Hindu has traditionally been an individual and familial affair rather than congregational, except for the occasional *melā* (religious festival). On the contemporary scene, however, Hindus in increasing numbers are going to cult centers for religious instruction and corporate worship with fellow devotees of a guru.<sup>48</sup> Thus, guruhood continues to influence, grow, and adjust.

### *Recapitulation and Concluding Remarks*

It should be emphasized that the guru is involved in a relationship, a vital communication between two personalities. In the absence of this relationship, a wandering *sādhu*, a *sannyāsi* of great renunciation, or a *r̥si* contemplating in his forest retreat, cannot be considered a guru. It is in the *Vedic* literature that the *guru-sishya* relationship was first recorded. Here, the guru was usually a *Brāhman*, a priest-teacher of the *Vedas*. He was revered for his knowledge of the *Vedas* and for his exemplary life. At the very least, he was god-like. He embodied the *Vedas* and was given the same respect as the *Vedas*

perhaps, thereby, laying the foundations for the later, intense devotion directed toward the guru.

The *Dharma Śāstras* reinforced the initial *Vedic-Upaniṣadic* insights by elaborating and legislating the appropriate attitudes toward the guru: propriety and obedience.

The *Epics* stressed the necessity of the guru and presented human and divine paragons of guruhood. They also highlighted another response to the guru beside propriety and obedience; namely, devotion, the paramount dimension of *bhakti*. The *Epics* record the attempt to move away from the *Brāhmanic* tradition in two areas: away from ritualistic (*Vedic*) and philosophical (*Upaniṣadic*) forms of worship to the more accessible devotional forms; away from nature gods to divine-human gods, the *avatāras*, with emphasis on their human dimension. In the *Purāṇas* there is a continuing trend to personalize the deity and to emphasize the identification of the guru with that deity.

Because of the difficulty of *Tantric sādhana*, the indispensability of the guru reaches its zenith within *Tantrism*. Also, the personalization of the deity definitively moves to another level: from *avatāra*, god “descending,” to the *Tantric* guru as *jīvanmukta*, man “ascending,” into divinity. The guru as *jīvanmukta* has attained freedom from *karma* and its limitations while still living physically. He thus indicates that the salvation experience is an immediate and lasting experience taking place in life, not only in death.

Within the *bhakti* tradition, Hinduism’s *Vedic* roots, though not extracted, have been violently pruned. The charismatic, self-realized teacher triumphed over the hereditary priest-teacher just as devotion and *pūjā* (rites of offering) triumphed over *Vedic homa* (sacrifice in fire) and *Upaniṣadic* speculation, meditation, and *tapas* (austerities). Emphasis switched from the ritualism, intellectualism, and legalism of *Brāhmanism* to the devotionalism, theism, and personalism of “Hinduism.” *Bhakti* became a path of liberation open to seekers regardless of intellectual sophistication or social rank. To some degree this development undermined caste position and gave a decisive impetus to the development of the contemporary position of the guru. The guru is now revered not because he was born a priest or because of academic knowledge but because of existential and inspirational qualities rooted in his personal realization. Salva-

tion centers not on textual authority or logical argument but on experiences of founders and teachers who are exemplars of what others can achieve. In this context, the guru often assumes the role of deity.

The guru has been and is many things to different eras and different people, even to those outside of the Hindu social system: a manifestation of the Absolute, a god or God, a vehicle of God's grace, or an essential guide on the spiritual path. In the contemporary Hindu ambience, often the guru is a means into or out of the *jātī* system; he is a means for exercising free choice or establishing corporate relationships; he may deal in matters spiritual, political or even occupational. Whatever the area of his sway, the guru is expected to facilitate external harmony and internal serenity to his *śisya*.

The traditional scriptural description of gurus has often been a listing of ideals rather than a reporting of actual lived qualities. Nevertheless, ideals are to be striven for and they point to what a culture maintains as important. What then does this historical context reveal about those ideal personal traits of the guru? Swami Gnaneswaranda states:

The guru has had the excellences as well as the defects and difficulties of human life. He has understood them thoroughly, and by means of his experiences and experiments he has discovered a method by which to rise above them.<sup>49</sup>

Thus, first of all, the guru is *fully human*; because of this, he is *wise*. He has the ability to rightly interact with persons and situations based on a broad range of knowledge, experience and understanding. For the guru has already walked the path chosen by the seeker. The guru, therefore, is in a position to *show the way* and to transmit the value of his experience to the disciple. The guru's wisdom is born of meditativeness,<sup>50</sup> that is, reflection on and absorption in his experiences. Thus, the guru *speaks little*.<sup>51</sup> When he does speak, however, it is with personal *equanimity*.<sup>52</sup> He does not show an extreme of emotions: he is not overly depressed in grief nor overly exhilarated in joy. It is not the exigencies of the external world which direct his life; his illumination, strength, and serenity come from within. Though he does not deny the external reality, his vision of it is *sacramental*. Swami Krishananda has written:

Seeing the diversity of characters, whether in a learned savant or a low caste, a cow, a dog or an elephant, the sage of equal vision recognizes the Divine Presence in them all, without disturbing the course of life based on such difference.<sup>53</sup>

Since the guru possesses the knowledge and experience of deeper Reality, he possesses all and requires nothing further. Therefore, he is described as *desireless*,<sup>54</sup> free from both temptation of acquisition and of renunciation. Though he possesses relatively nothing, paradoxically, the guru is a *giver*; he gives compassion<sup>55</sup> and, most importantly, he facilitates serenity or peace of mind.<sup>56</sup> This is the guru in the Hindu tradition.

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<sup>1</sup> Jan Gonda, *Change and Continuity in Indian Religion* (The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1965), p. 237.

<sup>2</sup> Kirpal Singh, *Godman* (Delhi: Ruhani Satsang, 1967), p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Brent, *Godmen of India* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1972), p. 28.

<sup>4</sup> Radha Kumud Mookerji, *Ancient Indian Education* (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1951), p. 114.

<sup>5</sup> Jagendranath Bhattacharya, *Hindu Castes and Sects* (Calcutta: Editions Indian, 1896), p. 20.

<sup>6</sup> A distinction was maintained between *Śrauta* rites and *Grīha* or domestic rites. The former were performed by priests who used *Vedic* hymns and special sacrificial fires. The latter were performed by the Aryan householder.

<sup>7</sup> P. Spratt, *Hindu Culture and Personality* (Bombay: Manaktalas, 1966), p. 29.

<sup>8</sup> *The Rāmāyana*, abridged and trans. C. V. Srinivasa Rao (Bangalore, India: Bangalore Press, 1970), p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> Troy Wilson Organ, *The Hindu Quest for the Perfection of Man* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University, 1970), p. 279.

<sup>10</sup> R. C. Hazra, *Studies in the Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs* (Dacca: The University of Dacca, 1940), p. 262.

<sup>11</sup> Shashibhusan Dasgupta, *Obscure Religious Cults* (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1962), p. 88.

<sup>12</sup> M. P. Pandit, "Guru-Sishya Tradition," *Prabuddha Bharata* 68 (July 1963): 389-92.

<sup>13</sup> Dasgupta, *Obscure Religious Cults*, p. 88.

<sup>14</sup> M. P. Pandit, *Gems from the Tantras* (Madras: Ganesh and Co., 1969), p. 21.

<sup>15</sup> Sir John Woodroffe, *Shakti and Śākta* (Madras: Ganesh and Co., 1951), pp. 491-492.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in Pandit, "Guru-Sishya Tradition," p. 390.

<sup>17</sup> *Nārada Bhakti Sūtras* quoted from: William Theodore DeBary et al., *Sources of Indian Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), p. 334.

<sup>18</sup> Pratima Kale, "The Guru and the Professional: The Dilemma of the Secondary School Teacher in Poona, India," *Comparative Education Review* 14 (October 1970): 371.

<sup>19</sup> Śaṅkara's *Vivekacudamani*, trans. Ramana Maharshi in *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, ed. Arthur Osborne (Tiruvannamalai: Sri Ramanasramam, 1968), pp. 198, 200, 201.

<sup>20</sup> Ashirbadi Lal Srivastava, *Medieval Indian Culture* (Jaipur, Shiva Lal Agarwala and Co., Ltd., 1964), pp. 54-55.

<sup>21</sup> Sundarabhātta, "Mantrartha Rahasya," quoted in Roma Bose, *Doctrines of Nimbarka and His Followers*, p. 116 [no further bibliographical information].

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in R. D. Ranade, *Pathway to God in Hindi Literature* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1959), pp. 136, 143.

<sup>23</sup> See the *Guru-māhātmya*, one of the important products of the Kabir Panth (F. E. Keay, *Kabir and His Followers* [London: Oxford University Press, 1931], p. 115).

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in K. B. Gajendragadkar, "The Mahārāstra Saints and Their Teachings," in *The Cultural Heritage of India*, ed. Haridas Bhattacharyya, 4 vols. (Calcutta: The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 1956), 4: 375.

<sup>25</sup> Rāmānuja, Rāmānanda, Anandatirtha, Basava and many others who established sects or who were distinguished as saints or poets were regarded as *avatāras*. Caitanya, Vallabhācārya, Nānak, and the majority of reformers of more recent times, were treated as such during their lifetimes. Even some of the most orthodox of Vedāntins claims as much for Śaṅkara. See A. Barth, *The Religions of India*, trans. J. Wood (Delhi: S. Chand and Co., 1969), p. 229.

<sup>26</sup> Gonda, *Change and Continuity*, p. 281.

<sup>27</sup> Bhattacharya, *Hindu Castes and Sects*, p. 103.

<sup>28</sup> S. C. Nandimath, *A Handbook of Viśiṣṭādvaita* (Bangalore: Basel Mission Press, 1942), p. 54.

<sup>29</sup> J. Gonda, *Viśnuism and Śiśaivism* (London: The Althone Press, 1970), p. 64.

<sup>30</sup> Sidney Spencer, *Mysticism in World Religion* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1971), p. 50.

<sup>31</sup> Srisa Chandra Vasu, *The Daily Practices of the Hindus* (Allahabad: Bhuvaneshvari Ashram, 1909), pp. 7-8.

<sup>32</sup> Swami Nirvedananda, "Sri Ramakrishna and Spiritual Renaissance," in *The Cultural Heritage of India*, ed. Haridas Bhattacharyya, 4 vols. (Calcutta: The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 1956), 4:685-86.

<sup>33</sup> *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1949), p. 214.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Swami Prabhavananda, *The Eternal Companion* (Hollywood: Vedanta Press, 1947), pp. 135-36.

<sup>35</sup> Swami Vivekānanda, "Discipleship," *The Voice of India*, November 1946, p. 170.

<sup>36</sup> Swami Sivananda, *Bliss Divine* (Rishikesh: Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy, 1965), p. 191.

<sup>37</sup> Swami Sivananda, *Necessity for Sannyasa* (Rishikesh: Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy, 1963), p. xxxv.

<sup>38</sup> Sivananda, *Bliss Divine*, p. 182.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182.

<sup>40</sup> Sita Wiener, *Swami Satchidananda* (New York: Bantam Books, 1972), p. 79.

<sup>41</sup> Swami Muktananda, *Guru* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 11.

<sup>42</sup> Khushwant Singh, "Godmen and Their Disciples," *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, 18 March 1973, p. 10.

<sup>43</sup> Frederick G. Bailey, *Tribe, Caste, and Nation: A Study of Political Activity and Political Change in Highland Orissa* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1960), pp. 197-237.

<sup>44</sup> David G. Mandelbaum, *Society in India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 2:597.

<sup>45</sup> Milton Singer, *Krishna: Myths, Rites, and Attitudes* (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1966), p. 73.

<sup>46</sup> Mandelbaum, *Society in India*, 2:527.

<sup>47</sup> Richard Lannoy, *The Speaking Tree: A Study of Indian Culture and Society* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 347).

<sup>48</sup> Marvin Henry Harper, *Gurus, Swamis, and Avatars* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1972), p. 9.

<sup>49</sup> Swami Gnaneswaranda, "Masters, True and False," *Vedanta and the West*, September-October 1949, p. 139.

<sup>50</sup> Krishnananda, A Short History of Religious and Philosophic Thought in India, pp. 91-92.

<sup>51</sup> Ranade, Pathway to God in Hindi Literature, p. 394.

<sup>52</sup> "K," *Sat-Darshana Bhashya and Talks with Maharshi* (Tiruvannamalai: Sri Ramanasramam, 1968), p. 118.

<sup>53</sup> Krishnananda, *A Short History*, p. 91.

<sup>54</sup> Sivananda, *Bliss Divine*, p. 186.

<sup>55</sup> John Moffitt, *Journey to Gorakhpur* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1972), pp. 144-45.

<sup>56</sup> Editor, "Bhagawan Shri Neelkantha Tathaji," *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, 10 December 1972, p. 53.

## PRAY TO THE HEAVENLY FATHER: A CHINESE NEW RELIGION IN MALAYSIA

S. E. ACKERMAN and RAYMOND L. M. LEE

Unlike the flourishing literature on Japanese new religions, there have been very few published accounts of Chinese new religions. To date, Marjorie Topley has reported on the Great Way sect based on material she collected in Malaya and Singapore between 1954 and 1955.<sup>1</sup> Welch and Yu have given an interesting description of a sect known as The Holy Teaching of Heaven's Virtue which they had studied in Hong Kong and Taiwan between 1958 and 1978.<sup>2</sup> The authors reported that both sects practise a syncretic religion that has been exported to overseas Chinese communities from mainland China.<sup>3</sup> Suppression of these sects in China and their spread overseas have prompted Marjorie Topley, in the conclusion of her 1963 article, to question their survival in the modern world. She speculated that they will gradually fade away as the older generation of sect leaders is replaced by younger men influenced by modern Western ideals and values. However, her speculations have become obsolete in the light of some recent events in the Malaysian Chinese community which we will describe in this paper.

We discovered the existence of a Chinese new religion in Malaysia<sup>4</sup> while conducting research on trance and spirit possession in 1978. This religious sect known as Baitiagong (Pray to the Heavenly Father) had been formed less than two years prior to our discovery of it. We have followed its activities over the past four years, observed its rituals and conducted many hours of interviews with its leader and members. In this paper, we will trace the history of the sect, describe the background of its leader, summarize its ideologies and relate its emergence to sociopolitical developments in the Malaysian Chinese community.

### *History of the Sect, 1976-1981*

The origins of the sect can be traced to the claims of its leader-founder, Guan Tianming,<sup>5</sup> who believes that he has been reincar-

nated on earth to rescue the Chinese in Malaysia from the diabolical influences of polytheism and to introduce them to monotheistic worship. Guan “discovered” his mission after experiencing a vision in which he heard a voice instructing him to destroy temples. When he protested that he lacked the powers, the voice told him to examine his wrists. Guan saw rays of light emanating from his wrists which he interpreted as divine powers for his iconoclastic mission. He was flown on a pilotless airplane to a place with Chinese and Hindu temples which he destroyed with his laser beams. When his mission was completed, he heard the voice say, “I am pleased. You are a disciple of God. You are the deliverer of all unclean spirits.”

This vision made a profound impact on his life, at a time when he was experiencing employment frustrations. Guan, a garrulous, English-educated Chinese in his mid-forties, is employed as a teacher in a local school. Guan is illiterate in Chinese but speaks the Cantonese dialect. He is married with two children. He received his education in a teachers’ college and university in peninsular Malaysia. His career as a teacher was interrupted when he enrolled in a local university to study public administration. After graduation, he lost his teaching job but found a job as a management consultant in a local firm. His brief stint in the business world ended a year later, following disagreements between him and his employers. He returned to teaching but was gravely disappointed by his failure to obtain a position as a school principal. It was during this time that he experienced this vision which prompted him to reinterpret his frustrations and disappointments as a necessary preparation for his role as God’s messenger.

As an initial effort in organizing his sect, Guan attempted to unite various Chinese spirit mediums and occult groups in his neighbourhood in Kuala Lumpur. His tactic was to demonstrate the superiority of his powers over them. He invited them to attend meditation sessions in the grounds of an unused Chinese temple but none came. However, he proselytized a group of elderly Chinese women known as the Baiqijie (Seven Praying Sisters) who met regularly at the temple to chant and go into trance. Guan awed them with his alleged supernatural powers and taught them to meditate. Soon, crowds of Chinese curiosity-seekers flocked to his

meetings to listen to his message, learn meditation and witness miraculous healings. But Guan still had not consolidated his powers over the Chinese spirit mediums who were potential threats to his inchoate sect. Challenges from these mediums led to several spiritual duels in which Guan claimed to have paralysed them in their trances. These mediums later apologised and acknowledged Guan's superiority over them. News of these events spread rapidly throughout the Chinese community, thus establishing Guan's reputation as a spiritual master to be treated seriously and with deference. Guan later adopted the title *Xiansheng* (Teacher).

With the defeat of the spirit mediums, Guan could now divert all his energies into building up his sect. He began to experience more visions. In one vision, he "saw" his previous two incarnations (a warrior and a magistrate in ancient China) and his present self dressed completely in white with five buttons of different colours sewn to his coat, each button representing a different element (metal, wood, fire, water, earth). This vision convinced him of his eternal role as a celestial enforcer. Guan now dresses in his white costume as a symbol of his purity and power, whenever he goes preaching and healing. A series of visions followed in which he received the verses for the sect's prayer and instructions of the style of meditation. Guan began to cultivate a unique image of himself through the public narration of these visions and acquisition of various power objects, such as a stick and several ballbearings which are alleged to be magical in nature.

In the early days of the sect, the thrust of recruitment was towards the Buddhists, Taoists and occultists in the Chinese community. As the sect progressed, Guan and his followers attempted to win converts from among the Chinese Christians. Guan envisions the expansion of his sect to embrace people of different religions. The Baitiangong sect now boasts of more than 2000 members throughout peninsular Malaysia. The mainstay of the sect is composed largely of working-class Chinese, while a small group of English-educated, middle-class Chinese occupies its upper echelons.<sup>6</sup> Guan appointed two deputies whom he designated as "button holders." Each of them wore a gold button representing the metal element and symbolizing knowledge. The button holders were appointed to manage spiritual matters in the sect, while a

working committee was established to oversee financial and other organizational affairs.

In late 1978, conflicts arose over the interpretation of Guan's visions and his moral conduct. The dispute over Guan's visions was initiated by a Chinese truck driver, an early convert, who charged that Guan's interpretive ability was marred by his low competence in the Chinese language. This person claimed that since Guan was not Chinese-educated, he had misunderstood the sect's prayer which was first revealed to him in the Cantonese dialect. This disagreement over scriptural interpretation extended into the sect's monotheistic ideology. The truck driver had interpreted a vision of a smiling face in the sun as indicating the divinity of all the planets in the universe. Guan rebuked him, fearing that such an interpretation would lead to idol worship. As a result of this dispute, the truck driver formed a faction comprising his kin and friends that continues to oppose Guan.

Further seeds of dissension were sowed when a number of incidents involving Guan's moral conduct were publicized by some followers. In one incident, two members charged that Guan had neglected the safety of their kin when he held a meditation session on a hill, exposing his followers to rain and sun for several days. A tense confrontation followed in which verbal abuse was exchanged between Guan and his accusers, leading almost to blows between the two parties. A more serious incident concerned charges of rape against Guan who claimed that the woman involved was being used by her kin (the truck driver and her sister) to defame him. Guan did not deny having had affairs with this woman and other female sect members, but argued that they had not resisted his advances. This scandal caused considerable consternation among the more conservative members, many of whom began to doubt Guan's claim that he was God-sent. Many reinterpreted Guan's powers as evil and departed hastily from the sect to seek salvation elsewhere, among them a gold button holder. However, the more loyal followers, who interpreted Guan's sexual prowess as concomitant with his supernatural privileges, rationalized the whole scandal as a test of their faith in their leader.

Incessant denouncements of Guan by his rivals in the local Chinese press and the departure of many members prompted him

to reorganize the sect to prevent the dissolution of his authority. Guan appointed two more button holders, one with the rank of gold button and the other the rank of water button (symbolizing tranquility). The three button holders are recognized as Guan's spiritual disciples. The sect also comprises several elders appointed by Guan to handle administrative matters. One of these elders was given the rank of co-chairman. He works closely with one of the button holders in supervising the other elders. Each elder is given a special task, such as finance, publications, etc. In addition, each elder is responsible for instructing and supervising a group of counsellors in the area under his charge. The counsellors function as middle-men between the decision-makers and the ordinary followers. They recruit members and report their activities to the elders.

Between 1977 and 1979, Guan gave weekly sermons, performed healings and conducted mass trances at an unused Chinese temple. In 1980, he acquired a piece of land near a Chinese new village in Kuala Lumpur.<sup>7</sup> The land is actually a disused mining pool which was filled in and claimed by Guan as his property. He now uses this land as a meeting ground for his fortnightly sermons. He spends the rest of his non-working hours proselytizing throughout peninsular Malaysia. The sect is still expanding and Guan hopes to spread his message to other Chinese living overseas. He has established a branch in Singapore and claims to have converted some Taiwanese who had visited him in Malaysia. He has also converted some Chinese living in the United States and Denmark.

#### *Background of the Leader<sup>8</sup>*

Guan Tianming was born on August 6, 1936 in the northern Malaysian city of Ipoh. He lost his mother during the Japanese Invasion of Singapore in 1942. After his father remarried, he was passed around like a football (to use Guan's words) among his relatives. Young Guan grew up on his own without developing strong attachments to his family. He claims that he had a tough childhood and had endured much ill treatment from his relatives. There were only a few people in his life who had been kind to him. One of them was his school principal's wife, a European woman,

who had bought him presents and invited him to attend church. She, however, was not the only person to have introduced him to Christian teachings. Guan was brought up by his aunt, a Methodist.

Guan's familiarity with the spirit world dates back to his childhood. His grandmother was a spirit medium who specialized in blessing water and talismans. As a youth, he had experienced several visions and miracles. He remembered that he saw a huge figure surrounded by angels when he was six years old. When he was 18 years old, he was saved from an accident by a mysterious voice. While travelling home in a bus, he suddenly heard a voice instructing him to move to the rear. A few seconds later, the bus crashed into a ravine. Guan speculated that had he not followed the voice's advice, he surely would have been killed. Five years later, he experienced an unforgettable vision. As he was lying in bed, he looked up at the sky through an opened window and saw a bright star approaching him. The star turned into a beautiful woman dressed completely in white who stooped down and kissed him on his forehead. Then she opened the bedroom door and left. Guan was so overwhelmed by the vision that he was paralyzed for several minutes. In recollecting this vision, Guan claims that the beautiful woman was actually an angel sent to appoint and prepare him for his role as God's messenger.

In later years, Guan's contacts with the spirit world diminished as he became deeply involved in the mundane world of teachers' union politics and business. Between 1960 and 1970, he was a school teacher in Kuala Lumpur while holding important portfolios in two teachers' unions. He was also active in several voluntary associations. In the late 1960s, he participated in the activities of the Malaysian Chinese Association (the major Chinese party in the coalition government of Malaysia). He left teaching in 1970 and worked as a management consultant in Sarawak (East Malaysia). He became disillusioned with the business world and returned to teaching a year later.

During this ten-year period, Guan was never fully successful in his quest for power and recognition. He failed to unite various ethnic factions in the teachers' unions and thereby to gain prominence as a renowned unionist. As a minor politician, he was un-

successful in influencing the course of Chinese politics in peninsular Malaysia. During his brief career as a management consultant, his colleagues had thwarted his grandiose plans for business expansion. Even as a teacher, he had been unable to attain his ambition of becoming a school principal, despite his qualifications and long years of experience in education. His vision of temple destructions symbolized for him what he could achieve in the spiritual world, as a resolution to his failures as a leader in the mundane world. Other dreams and visions followed. He dreamt that a lion, a white elephant and a white horse took him up to a mountain to meditate. He also claimed that he had visited heaven and hell in his astral sojourns. While meditating one evening, he saw a huge tablet descend from the sky and felt it enter his body. He interpreted this vision as the beginning of his new spiritual self, a *tabula rasa* on which his future actions were to be recorded. His previous visions and miracles were recalled and fitted into a scheme of events now defined as spiritually significant.<sup>9</sup> Thus began his career as a magical missionary.

### *Sect Ideologies and Activities*

Guan teaches that salvation can only be attained by strict adherence to five principles:

1. Realization of Consciousness
2. Realization of Self
3. Realization of the Soul
4. Realization of Heaven and Hell
5. Realization of the Creator<sup>10</sup>

An understanding of these principles is said to enhance a person's spiritual awareness and to prepare him for the higher planes of existence after death. But the realization of these five principles is only possible through the practice of meditation.<sup>11</sup> Guan teaches a simple method of meditation. He instructs his followers to sit in lotus position with their eyes closed, arms resting on their abdomens and palms facing upwards. Before adopting this posture, the acolyte kneels with his hands clasped and, facing skywards, surrenders himself to God. During meditation, the soul is believed to leave the body travelling to the astral world.<sup>12</sup> However, Guan

warns his followers to refrain from meditation when he is not present. Those who do not heed his warning become susceptible to spirit possession. Only his presence can prevent roaming spirits from entering and possessing bodies of followers in meditation. These guidelines are consistent with Guan's perception of his role as God's messenger on earth. He teaches that man can only realize but not understand God. Meditation merely provides a channel of communication with the spiritual realm but only he, as mediator between heaven and earth, can guide his followers to God-realization.<sup>13</sup>

Guan teaches that the self consists of the body and the soul. The body is the vehicle for the soul to undergo the "Examination of Life."<sup>14</sup> After death the soul continues to exist in either of four spiritual dimensions: heaven, hell, limbo and the earth plane. Heaven refers to planes of tranquility and ecstasy which can be further graded from high to low heaven. Once the soul qualifies to go to heaven, there is no more reincarnation unless it is returned to earth by God's will. Hell is where sinful souls are punished. Limbo is reserved for those who disbelieve God but nevertheless have performed good deeds in life. The earth plane is inhabited by roaming souls, i.e. those who have rejected God or those who have committed suicide. Souls in hell, limbo and the earth plane will eventually be reincarnated on earth to repeat the "Examination of Life."

Guan's teachings emphasize salvation through direct experience. He encourages his followers to meditate in order to travel in the astral dimension, to witness sufferings in hell and tranquility in heaven, and to recognize his role as the appointed saviour. Having introduced a neophyte to the spiritual world through direct experience, Guan arouses his fears of the unpleasant consequences of not worshipping Tiangong in the proper way.<sup>15</sup> He then advises the neophyte to remove all idols from his house. He believes that idol worship is spiritually deleterious because a person unconsciously transfers his energy to the idol when he prays to it. He recommends his followers to place on their family altars a brass urn with four joss sticks in it. This has become the sect's logo: the largest joss stick representing Tiangong and the three smaller ones representing Christianity, Islam and Baitiangong. His followers are instructed to pray to Tiangong at least twice a day, once upon waking and once

before sleeping. They must kneel, facing skywards with their hands clasping a joss stick and reciting one of three prayers or all of them.<sup>16</sup> Guan also insists that his followers pray for their ancestors and not to them. He reasons that ancestor worship is somewhat similar to idol worship because both distract a person from God-realization.

In 1979 Guan introduced a set of rules of sexual conduct in response to accusations of moral vagaries. Baitiangong members are permitted to practise monogamy, fornication (defined as sexual relations between unmarrieds, or between married men and unmarried women) and bigamy,<sup>17</sup> but must refrain from homosexuality, prostitution, incest, adultery and rape. The more conservative members rejected Guan's permissive ideology, arguing that he had introduced these rules to justify his immoral behaviour. The more loyal members accepted these rules without question. Guan has interpreted the ideological enshrinement of sexual permissiveness in his sect as an assault on traditional Chinese morality. His rejection of ancestor worship and propagation of sexual permissiveness are part of his strategy to project an image of his sect as different from other Chinese sects. Yet he does not dare to alienate too many Chinese from his sect. Thus, he has formed a lion dance troupe and promoted the use of Mandarin to project the sect's Chinese identity.

The eschatological and ethical systems described here are still in their formative stages. Guan is still struggling to establish a coherent system of thought that will form the basis of sect theology and soteriology. Sect ideology is gradually shaped by the blending of Christian and Chinese folk religious ideas and by Guan's innovative responses to various critical events (such as charges of moral looseness). The gradual institutionalization of the sect implies the possible development of a well-defined set of ideologies in time to come.

### *Identity and Syncretism*

Baitiangong, although explicitly concerned with saving the Chinese community from the metaphysical hell of the hereafter, also implicitly seeks to deal with the mundane hell of Chinese

political impotence in the here-and-now of Malaysian society. The subordinate political position of the Chinese community<sup>18</sup> is attributed to divine punishment for idolatry and failure to worship Tiangong. Guan proposes the Baitiangong ideology of salvation—monotheistic worship and renunciation of Chinese folk religious practices—as a solution to what he perceives as the political and spiritual damnation of the Chinese community in Malaysia.

Salvation, in Guan's view, requires a new formulation of Chinese ethnic identity. He seeks to redefine Chinese identity through an ideological synthesis of Protestant Christian themes and Chinese cultural symbols. The core elements of Baitiangong ideology—anti-idolatry, strict monotheism and promotion of simplicity in funerals—are derived from Guan's encounters with Protestant Christianity during his school days. Juxtaposed with these Protestant themes is the selection of the brass urn with joss sticks as the symbol of monotheistic worship and the Baitiangong sect's logo, and promotion of such cultural activities as martial arts, playing traditional musical instruments, lion dance performances and use of the Mandarin dialect.<sup>19</sup> Drawing upon symbols of Chinese culture and elements of Christianity, Guan exhorts the Chinese community to spiritual purification and political unity.

Although the central themes of Baitiangong ideology are also disseminated by Christian and Muslim missionaries<sup>20</sup> in Malaysia, Guan's manipulation of Chinese cultural symbols and, most importantly, his enactment of a shamanistic role have greater appeal to the Chinese community. Guan who styles himself as a mediator between heaven and earth, commands prestige as a powerful shaman able to exteriorize his soul and travel to supernatural realms, to perform miraculous healings, to exorcise evil spirits and to subdue rival shamans in spiritual duels. The institution of shamanism, which flourished in China at least as early as 109 B.C.,<sup>21</sup> has continued to shape Chinese folk religious beliefs and practices. Shamanism is the focus of popular religion in Fujien and Guangdong, the provinces of south China from where the majority of Chinese migrants to Malaysia originated. Spirit medium cults, perpetuating folk traditions of shamanism, are widespread throughout contemporary Malaysia and Singapore.<sup>22</sup> Guan's demonstrations of supernatural powers, highly valued by the

followers of Chinese popular religion, have established him as a man of authority and consequence whose teachings are worthy of serious consideration.

Despite repudiation of ancestor worship, elaborate funerals and the use of idols, amulets and oracles, the Baitiangong sect is firmly embedded within the matrix of Chinese folk religion. Thaumaturgical performances are Guan's most important means of propagating Baitiangong teachings. These displays of supernatural power, rather than the sect's ideology, attract a large following to Baitiangong. Members of the sect are primarily interested in Guan's miraculous powers; ideology is of peripheral concern to them. Guan expresses frustration with followers who seek him out for healing and once cured take no interest in the Baitiangong teachings. He now hesitates to oblige requests for healing until he is convinced that the supplicant is genuinely interested in learning about his teachings.

Guan caters to the same clientele as the spirit medium cults with which he openly competes. His style of shamanism, however, differs in several significant respects from the traditional spirit mediumship popular in Malaysia and Singapore. Unlike spirit mediums who characteristically are possessed by deities temporarily manifesting supernatural powers through the medium's body, Guan specializes in spirit journeys whereby his soul allegedly leaves his body to visit heaven and hell.<sup>23</sup> He claims he is able to teach his followers to exteriorize their souls so that they, too, can participate in astral travel. Guan relies upon his own personal spiritual powers in guiding his followers' souls, locking his rivals into trances or conducting healings and exorcisms, rather than invoking the assistance of supernatural beings as do possessed spirit mediums. His shamanic performances are not characterized by ecstasy or frenzy; he is always in complete control of himself. Through his role as a shaman, Guan imparts teachings and also performs eagerly sought miracles. Spirit medium cults, on the other hand, are limited to thaumaturgy.

Guan's practice of shamanism not only attracts followers to Baitiangong, but also confirms the truth of his teachings. He emphasizes that direct experience of heaven and hell, by means of spirit journeys under his guidance, will convince anyone of the cor-

rectness of Baitiangong teachings. At the Baitiangong mass meditation sessions, Guan guides his followers on spirit journeys to heaven and hell, after which some of them give richly embroidered testimonials of meeting ancestors suffering in hell, seeing Guan in the clouds, or other extraordinary visions. These testimonials are later printed and circulated widely. In this way, even those of Guan's followers who do not personally experience soul travel during the meditation sessions regard Guan's claims as credible and anticipate that they, too, will eventually visit heaven and hell.

Direct or vicarious participation in spirit journeys and other miracles demonstrates the reality of Tiangong's power in the here-and-now mundane world as well as in the hereafter. The ideology of Baitiangong offers the possibility of immediate access to supernatural power, through Guan's meditation, to overcome the frustrations that Chinese in Malaysia confront as individuals and as a community. Baitiangong's communication of Protestant Christian themes through Chinese cultural symbols and shamanism affirms and enhances Chinese ethnic identity while presenting a credible soteriology.

### *Conclusion*

We have described the emergence of a syncretic Chinese new religion and the processes by which its ideology, ritual and organizational structure are developing. The Baitiangong sect, still in its formative stage—having recently celebrated its fifth anniversary—lacks an elaborated, systematized ideology, liturgy and ritual practices. There is as yet no authoritative scripture as a basis for the sect. While Baitiangong is permeated by Chinese folk traditions—particularly shamanism—it does not trace its descent to or even have indirect links with any previously established Chinese syncretic sect. As a consequence of the absence of a “lineage” or well articulated sect tradition, Baitiangong is a highly fluid, flexible sect actively engaged in the work of defining itself and creating a comprehensive world-view.

In its paucity of ideology, ritual and scriptural authority, Baitiangong more closely resembles non-Chinese religious movements that currently enjoy great popularity in Kuala Lumpur and other

urban areas in Malaysia, than well established Chinese syncretic sects such as those described by Topley, Welch and Yu. Baitiangong's emphasis on direct experience of supernatural power with a minimum of liturgy and ritual is not unlike the orientation of Pentecostalism, Subud and the Sai Baba movement, all of which attract large followings of Malaysians, including ethnic Chinese. Some Baitiangong followers, both among the rank and file and top echelon, have been or are still involved with the above non-Chinese religious movements. Baitiangong must be viewed as one of many competing religious alternatives catering to the wide spread demand for immediate contact with supernatural power.

These new religious developments in Malaysia, as well as the continued vitality of traditional spirit medium cults, suggests that Topley's anticipation of the extinction of syncretic sects may be unfounded. She speculates that esoteric religions and "the magical powers which such religions claim to offer" lack appeal to the younger generation since "(i)n Malaya to-day would-be leaders of society pattern their ideas of virtue and ideal government mainly on modern Western philosophies."<sup>24</sup> The leadership of Baitiangong and similar syncretic religious movements is largely drawn from modern educated, English-speaking, middle-class professionals. The enthusiasm with which both Westernized and traditionally oriented Chinese seek the magical powers proffered by syncretic sects, such as Baitiangong, generates a proliferation of religious groups which promise direct experience of the supernatural.

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<sup>1</sup> Marjorie Topley, "The Great Way of the Former Heaven: A Chinese Semi-Secret Religion in Malaya," *The New Malayan* 2:13-23 (1957), and "The Great Way of Former Heaven: A Group of Chinese Secret Religious Sects," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 26: 362-392 (1963).

<sup>2</sup> Holmes Welch and Chun-Fang Yu, "The Tradition of Innovation: A Chinese New Religion," *Numen* XXVII, 2: 222-246 (1980).

<sup>3</sup> Other accounts of Chinese new religions can also be found in the literature, but these have focused mainly on millenarian movements involved in rebellions in nineteenth century China; see Susan Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion in China: The Eight Trigrams Uprising of 1813* (New Haven, 1976); Daniel Overmyer, *Folk Buddhist*

*Religion* (Harvard, 1976); Frederic Wakeman, Jr., "Rebellion and Revolution: The Study of Popular Movements in Chinese History," *Journal of Asian Studies* XXXVI, 2: 201-237 (1977).

<sup>4</sup> About 35 percent of Malaysia's population is Chinese (not including the Borneo states of Sabah and Sarawak). Malaysia's trade relations with China date back to the 15th and 16th centuries, but mass Chinese migration to Malaysia occurred towards the late 19th and early 20th centuries during the British colonial era. Most of these migrants came from the southern provinces of China. Today, most of the Chinese are concentrated in the urban centres on the west coast of peninsular Malaysia. For a detailed account of the Chinese in Malaysia, see the dated but still useful study by Victor Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya* (Oxford, 1948).

<sup>5</sup> This is a pseudonym. The leader is still alive and we feel that it is not proper to use his real name at this time.

<sup>6</sup> There are many English-educated Chinese in Malaysia who do not read or write Chinese (most notably the Baba or Straits Chinese who speak mainly English and Malay). Guan and many of his close followers (who are mainly teachers and civil servants) belong to this category of English-speaking Chinese. However, some of them do read and write a little Chinese. Many of them speak Cantonese and one or more Chinese dialects (Hokkien, Khek, etc.). Guan preaches in Cantonese spiced with many English words. Many of his liturgies and ideas are first recorded in English, then only transcribed into Chinese.

<sup>7</sup> Chinese new villages in Malaysia were originally Chinese squatter settlements that were relocated, under the Briggs' Plan, from fringe jungle areas to well guarded centres in various parts of peninsular Malaysia. This was part of a strategy by the government to isolate the communist guerillas from these villages which often served as their food supply and recruitment bases. At the end of the communist insurgency (known as the Malayan Emergency 1948-60), many of these villages were not dismantled and have since become settled communities. Most of the residents of these new villages are working-class Chinese who speak very little English.

<sup>8</sup> This is a summary of some ten hours of taped interviews we had recorded with Guan.

<sup>9</sup> There is a striking similarity between Guan and Hung Xiuchuan, the leader of the Taiping Rebellion. Both men experienced visions that suggested their spiritual importance at a time when they were depressed by failures. Unlike Guan, Hung Xiuchuan had failed the civil examinations many times, thus his hopes for becoming a government official were dashed. Both men were also influenced by Christianity. However, unlike Guan, Hung was introduced to Christian teachings as an adult. For a succinct biography of Hung Xiuchuan, see Henry McAleavy, *The Modern History of China* (New York, 1967). Some of Hung's spiritual experiences are also related by Vincent Shih, *The Taiping Ideology* (Washington, 1967).

<sup>10</sup> These five principles (wuge shrgan) appear in a booklet that Guan distributes to the public. The English version of these five principles precedes the Chinese version in the booklet. The principles in Chinese are (following the above sequence): ganjue de shrgan, zishen de shrgan, linghun de shrgan, tiantang diyu de shrgan, tiangong de shrgan.

<sup>11</sup> The Chinese term for meditation used by Guan and his followers is shang zuo. In ordinary Chinese usage, meditation is referred to as da zuo. The character, shang (meaning "up"), as used by Guan implies that meditation is a form of spiritual ascension, with the soul leaving the body and travelling to various astral realms.

<sup>12</sup> Many followers have reported out-of-body experiences during meditation. They claimed that their souls had travelled to the astral world under the guidance of Guan's spirit. Sojourns to planes of serenity and ecstasy are interpreted as "a taste of heaven," while encounters with deceased friends and relatives in constant pain and suffering are interpreted as descents into hell. Their experiences are usually recorded, printed (in English and Chinese) and distributed to other sect members and non-members.

<sup>13</sup> The influence of Christianity on Guan can be inferred from his self-perceptions. His role as intermediary between God and Man is comparable to Jesus Christ's claim that, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (St. John 14:6). Guan claims that he had met Jesus on one of his astral journeys. He describes Jesus as a tall and rugged man, a mirror image of himself—Guan is almost six feet tall, broad-shouldered and arrogant.

<sup>14</sup> The "Examination of Life" is quite similar to the Christian concept of "you reap what you sow." The good deeds of a person are weighed against his bad deeds in his judgement before God, and his soul is sent either to heaven, hell, limbo, or the earth plane accordingly. This concept in Chinese is shrshang kaoshr.

<sup>15</sup> In his sermons, Guan always talks about the pain and torment that sinful souls have to endure in hell. He emphasizes the punitive aspects of Tiangong, pointing out that Tiangong is not always forgiving and merciful, that individuals who have committed heinous sins will have to pay for them in hell. Although most of Guan's sermons border on the fire and brimstone variety, he is not very explicit about the sins that humans always commit. However, idol worship is treated as the most serious sin in his ambiguous list of reproachable behaviour.

<sup>16</sup> These prayers are the Lord's Prayer, some verses from Al-Fatihah (the opening chapter of the Quran) and the Baitiangong Prayer. The Baitiangong Prayer was revealed to Guan in one of his meditations. It is a simple prayer that praises Tiangong and his creations. Guan selects verses from Al-Fatihah because of his admiration for Islam which renounces idol worship. He has not attempted to convert any Muslims to Baitiangong because Islam is the state religion in Malaysia and converting Muslims to other religions is regarded as a serious offence. Guan uses all three prayers when he performs blessings, healings and exorcisms.

<sup>17</sup> Guan's ideas on fornication and bigamy are derived from his belief that women outnumber men by two to one. According to this belief, it is natural for men to be promiscuous. Fornication and bigamy are, therefore, not moral violations.

<sup>18</sup> The Malays, the largest ethnic community in Malaysia, dominate politics through their electoral majority and control of the government bureaucracy, police and military. Although economically powerful, the Chinese community has steadily lost political influence since 1969. The adoption of aggressively pro-Malay policies during the past decade has weakened the Chinese politically and, moreover, posed a threat to their economic position. The Chinese community's political fragmentation has hindered effective resistance to these policies. A sense of frustration and demoralization is pervasive throughout the Chinese community. Most Chinese in Malaysia keenly resent their political subordination, which they regard as "second class citizenship."

<sup>19</sup> The incorporation of Mandarin and the lion dance into Baitiangong implicitly politicizes the sect. The leading Chinese political party in Malaysia has attempted to unite the faction-ridden Chinese community through a "speak Mandarin" campaign. Lion dance performances in Malaysia are also associated with Chinese ethnic consciousness and political aspirations. On several occasions, prominent

Malay political leaders have publicly condemned the lion dance as "un-Malaysian" and have sought to restrict performances of the dance. A police permit is required for public performances of the lion dance and such permits are not easily obtained.

<sup>20</sup> While Islam is the official religion of Malaysia, any other religions may be freely practised as long as no attempts are made to proselytize Muslims. All Malays are Muslims by birth, while a small proportion of other ethnic groups also practice Islam. The Malaysian government encourages non-Muslims to convert to Islam by offering them special incentives. Despite the economic incentives to convert, most Chinese are strongly reluctant to do so since conversion to Islam is viewed by Malays and non-Malays alike as also entailing a change in ethnic identity. In Malaysia, to convert to Islam and to join the Malay community are perceived as synonymous.

<sup>21</sup> J. J. M. De Groot, *The Religious System of China*, Vol. 6 (Leyden, 1910).

<sup>22</sup> See Allan J. A. Elliot, *Chinese Spirit Medium Cults in Singapore* (London, 1955) for an authoritative description of Chinese shamanism and folk religion. Cults similar to those Elliot studied have proliferated in urban areas of Malaysia and enjoy great popularity throughout all levels of Chinese society. Sophisticated, western-educated Chinese seek the services of spirit mediums as avidly as the more traditionally oriented, vernacular-educated members of the community.

<sup>23</sup> Chinese tradition offers numerous examples of magical flight and spirit journeys. The classical texts refer to many emperors, sages, alchemists and sorcerers who possessed these powers. See Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (Princeton, 1964). Spirit journeys also appear as a theme in early Chinese poetry. See David Hawkes, *Ch'u Tz'u, The Songs of the South* (Oxford, 1959).

<sup>24</sup> Topley, op. cit., p. 391.

# MANIFESTAZIONI DEL SIMBOLISMO ASSIALE NELLE TRADIZIONI CINESI ANTICHE

RICCARDO M. FRACASSO

(Addendum to *Numen* 28 (1981), 215)

Publishers and editors regret that in the final printing process notes 83-86 have been omitted:

83) Cf. *Corpus des pierres sculptées Han*, Parigi-Pechino, 1950, vol. I (Shantung), pl. 37, 38, 252.

84) Cf. Loewe, *Ways to Paradise*, cit., pp. III e 153, note 134-136; F. S. Drake, "Sculptured Stones of the Han Dynasty", *Monumenta Serica*, VIII (1943), fig. 27. Assai discutibile appare l'affermazione di Loewe (p. 111), secondo cui gli alberi *Fu* e *Jo* sarebbero delle varianti dell'albero del centro; come si è visto la loro funzione sembra essere invece un'altra, quella cioè di precisare la posizione dell'albero centrale.

85) Cf. K. Finsterbusch, *Verzeichnis und Motivindex der Handarstellungen*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1971, vol. II, fig. 75; Loewe, cit., fig. 21. In una figurazione di *Hsi-wang-mu* (cf. Finsterbusch, cit., fig. 44) compare anche un animale (una volpe) a nove code ed in un altro rilievo dello Shantung compare un animale a nove teste, quasi sicuramente *K'ai-ming*, il guardiano del *K'un-lun*. A forma di montagna sono infine gli incensieri di cui parla Dubs, "Han 'Hill-Censors'", cit.

86) Secondo S. Cammann, "The 'TLV' pattern on cosmic mirrors of the Han dynasty", *Journ. of the Am. Or. Soc.*, 68 (1948), p. 165, questi specchi sarebbero uno schema del mondo "as though seen by a Heavenly eye looking down from the palace of the Supreme Emperor through the hole in the dome of the sky". Lo studio più recente e completo sugli specchi a 'TLV' è in Loewe, *Ways to Paradise*, cit., pp. 60-85 e 158-229.

## TOKENS OF IMMORTALITY IN HAN GRAVES\*

(*Review article*)

ANNA SEIDEL

(with an appendix by MARC KALINOWSKI)

Few scholars today possess the talent to capture the interest of a general audience for topics in ancient Chinese history of thought. A remarkably large share of such exceptional studies has been produced by the British tradition of scholarship. Arthur Waley, Joseph Needham and Michael Loewe, among others, have written books in a beautiful style intelligible and delectable to read for anyone seriously interested in China, while endowing these books with so many new data and insights that they became milestones or even classics of scholarship for the specialist. After *Crisis and Conflict in Han China*, an excellent study on the intellectual and institutional history of the middle Han period (104 BC to AD 9), Michael Loewe turned to the investigation of the mythology and religion of the Han. In *Ways to Paradise*, as the dust-jacket informs us, he "assesses a wealth of new archeological evidence in an attempt to uncover the attitudes of the pre-Buddhist Chinese to matters relating to death and the hereafter".

This overall concern unites the three specialized studies on Han art and iconography that compose the book: 1° the recently discovered painting on the silk funeral banner from Ma-wang tui dated around 168 BC; 2° the bronze mirrors of the so-called TLV pattern that came into fashion around the beginning of the Christian era and reflect the rich cosmological symbolism characteristic of Han thought and 3° the representations of the Queen Mother of the West which testify to growing beliefs in personified cosmic powers, from perhaps a century later. With his extensive knowledge of recent archeological discoveries (see Loewe, 1976 and

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\* Michael Loewe, *Ways to Paradise, the Chinese Quest for Immortality*, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1979.

1977 in the bibliography app. to this review), the author combines great skill in relating them to the written sources of this early and seminal period of Chinese history which was to become the classical age for all later Far Eastern philosophy, religion and art.

If the present review grew into an article, it is not because of any need for lengthy criticism or corrections but rather in response to the wealth of stimulating new ideas which the book presents on some of the most magnificent and controversial new finds in Han tombs. None of the author's main conclusions have yet been contradicted by new archeological evidence or by the fast moving worldwide discussions on these finds. An attempt to include some of the most important of these newer discoveries and discussions (since 1978) has further lengthened the following pages.

### I. *The Han frame of mind*

The ideas about death and afterlife that presided over the creation of Han tombs are described in a short first chapter. The author distinguishes three facets of Han mentality, one centered on nature—representing what can vaguely be called the Taoist trend of the time—, a second concerned with the forces of destiny which can be known and dealt with through divination, and a third, associated with the Confucian tradition, emphasizing the role of man and attributing a controlling influence to Heaven. None of these views contained a satisfactory explanation of death or of man's fate after death. The contemporary beliefs about life and death are reflected in some symbols of Han art that were designed to lead the spiritual force of man (*hun*) to an otherworldly paradise, and in the lavish tomb furnishings which tell of a concern to keep the remaining vital force (*p'o*) appeased, and to prevent it from reappearing as a malevolent ghost (*kuei*). The common ideas concerning an existence *after* death were, acc. to the author, expressed in beliefs, myths and legends about paradises: the isles of the immortals in the Eastern sea and later, increasingly, the K'un-lun mountains in the West.

The Han period was also the time when beliefs in deathless immortality gained acceptance, as exemplified in Emperor Wu's search for the elixir and in the evolution of physiological techniques

(attested by the gymnastics chart from Ma-wang tui tomb 3) that were to become part of the Taoist religion. The author might have made a clearer distinction between beliefs in an *afterlife* and beliefs in ways to *avoid* death. Since the latter are not considered at all, the concluding paragraph puzzles the reader. Pre-Buddhist China where “immortality was achieved, if at all, by an appeal to cosmic forces or by the symbolical use of certain cosmic patterns” is there contrasted with the “totally different” Buddhist concept: “that of personal transformation by means of spiritual disciplines and devotions, of types so far unknown in China”. Not only does this sound as if Buddhism had brought new methods of achieving immortality (which it did not), but also it might convey the impression that “personal transformation by means of spiritual disciplines” had been unheard-of in China before the advent of Buddhism. This is not the case. The name that first comes to mind as a pre-Buddhist practitioner of spiritual disciplines is Chuang tzu, the Taoist mystic who lived before the period under investigation here and who was to become, much later, almost a founding father of the Buddhist Ch'an (Zen) school. The transmission of his writings and his influence during the Han period deserve a study which might show that pre-Buddhist Chinese and Buddhist beliefs about the afterlife cannot be that clearly divided into manipulation of cosmic forces here and personal, spiritual transformation there. Chuang tzu ridiculed the seekers of longevity (chap. 15, Watson, p. 167-68) which means that they existed already at his time. It was during the Han period that these practitioners searched for ways to paradise bypassing physical death. Although concerned mainly with the study of tomb furnishings, a book on Han “ways to paradise” might have touched on the difficult question of these precursors of Taoism.

## II. *The funerary banner of the Countess of Tai*

The second chapter deals with the famous silk painting on the banner found in the Han tomb no. 1 of the Ma-wang tui site (Hunan province), dated 168 BC or slightly later (cf. fig. 1). It is a joy to read the well-informed and clear summary of the numerous Chinese, Japanese and Western studies (up to 1977) which have

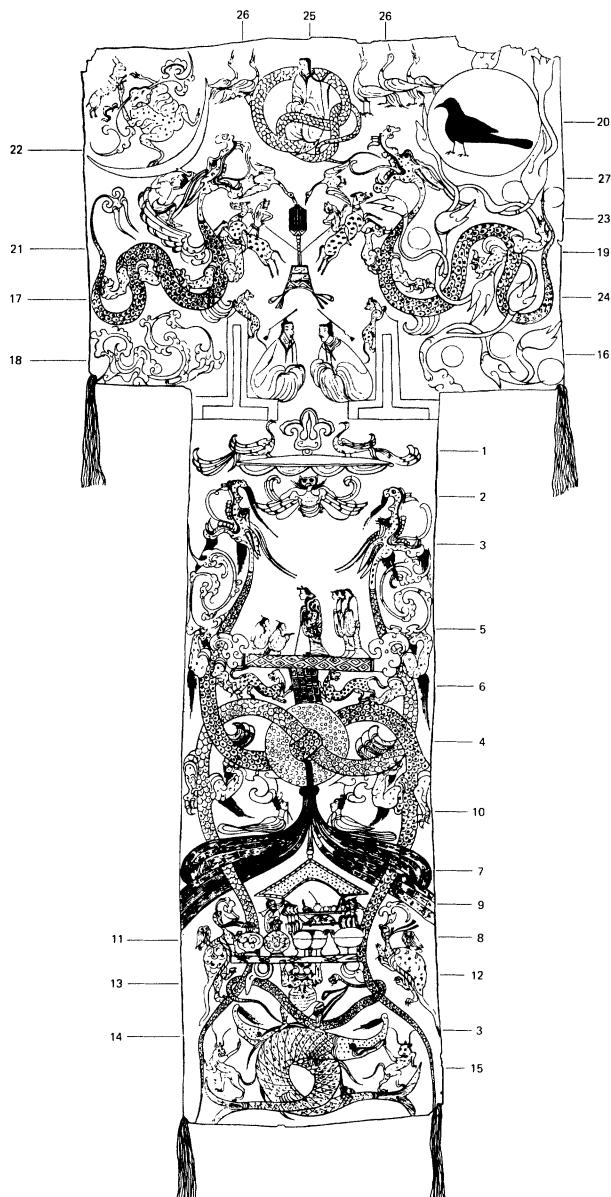


Fig. 1. Painting on the funeral banner from tomb no. 1, Ma-wang-tui (*Kaogu* 1973, 1, p. 44; numbers added by Loewe, p. 36, fig. 7).

already been devoted to this important archeological site. This presentation should be recommended as the best introductory reading on Ma-wang tui. One finds discussed 1° the value of the evidence from this site, 2° the position of the kingdom of Ch'ang-sha in the Han empire in the second century BC, 3° the structure, furnishings, dating etc. of tomb no. 1, 4° the function of the funerary banner and 5° the symbolism of the painting itself. In this last and most important section, the author sums up the diverging opinions of other scholars in what reads like an elaborate international guessing game.

The crux in the interpretation of paintings is always the need to find

1° comparable contemporary paintings—in this case very few: the damaged banner from Ma-wang tui tomb no. 3, coffin decorations, frescoes in other tombs; three other banners found in Shantung and in Kansu are over a century later and therefore of limited value here;

2° contemporary or earlier texts apt to explain iconographic details—here mainly the *Shan-hai ching*, parts of the *Ch'u tz'u*, the *Huai-nan tzu*, *Shih chi* and *Han shu*.

A danger the author points out (p. 31) and which not all other scholars have avoided, is to correlate the painting with Han concepts that were, in the middle of the second century BC when the tomb was closed, not yet fully developed, such as the theory of Yin-Yang and the Five Elements, and the Han cosmology with its triad of Heaven, Earth and Man.

To give an idea of the complex problems involved and of the imaginative flights of interpreters, I would like to summarize the author's interpretation of the painting and contrast it with two other attempts published since (Sofukawa, 1979; Hou Ching-lang, 1981). The T-shaped banner can be divided into a lower vertical part with several superimposed scenes or stages framed by the dragon coils, and an upper horizontal part which clearly represents heavenly regions. While the various interpretations of this celestial section disagree only in some details, opinions differ considerably regarding the meaning of the vertical part below it.

Hou Ching-lang, in agreement with the majority of the Chinese authors, sees it as the terrestrial counterpart of the upper section, consisting of a banquet scene on earth (often held to be the funerary banquet for the Countess, cf. Fig. 7, scene no. 8) and, on the platform above it, a scene (no. 5) showing the Countess on her way to heaven, surrounded by servants and celestial emissaries, the latter kneeling and presenting trays with dishes containing some foods of immortality. The canopy (no. 1) above this scene is seen as the celestial vault, comparable to the “flowery canopy” (*hua kai*) which was part of Wang Mang’s (r. AD 9-23) ritual symbolism for “ascension to immortality”.

Everybody seems to agree that this vertical part represents the deceased woman’s progress from her death to her arrival in heaven. But, whereas Hou and others interpret the scene with the Countess (no. 5) as an intermediate stage between heaven and earth, with the banquet beneath and the celestial vault above, Sofukawa and Loewe go further, on different tracks. Sofukawa sees the Countess sitting in a dragon chariot or dragon boat being borne aloft not to heaven but more precisely to Mount K’un-lun. The platform on which she stands becomes the square body and the “vault of heaven” (no. 1) becomes the round canopy of a chariot drawn by the two dragons. The banquet below (no. 8) is the funerary ceremony and sacrifice for her soul. The gate of heaven above the chariot’s roof becomes one of the four oriented gates of K’un-lun, where two emissaries of the Celestial Emperor (T’ien-ti) wait to welcome the Countess.

Loewe (and Shang Chih-t’an before him) see in the same vertical section a representation of the island paradise of P’eng-lai “through which lay the road to eternity” (p. 37). These interpreters have been struck by the shape of the intertwining dragons which, together with a base (the lower platform, no. 8) and a lid (the canopy, no. 1) form the outline of a calabash-shaped vase. They point out that the mythical islands in the Eastern Seas are often thought of as floating gourds or even called P’eng-gourd or -vase (P’eng-hu, Ying-hu, etc.).

Sofukawa’s and Loewe’s interpretations are both well-argued. One consideration in favor of P’eng-lai might be that, as Loewe states in his preface (p. vii), the magical islands in the Eastern Seas

attracted more prayer and devotion during the second century BC than the Western Mount K'un-lun which became increasingly popular only during the second Han Dynasty (AD 25-220). Thus it seems more likely that the P'eng-lai paradise was present in the minds of the mourners and well-wishers preparing the Countess' funeral. However, the evidence for the representation of P'eng-lai on the banner is also slight. No text mentions pictures of P'eng-lai on funerary banners (*Hou Han shu* and *Li chi* mention sun, moon and ascending dragons painted on such banners, cf. Hou, p. 53) but, considering the lack of sources, this silence does not mean much. The banner itself depicts none of the other colorful features of P'eng-lai in the descriptions of the time (palaces of jade and gold, white birds and beasts, pearl trees, fruits that confer immortality, etc.). All we have to go on is the calabash shape suggested by the dragon coils as well as several beasts and symbols of immortality which would fit this as well as other interpretations. The gourd shape certainly is remarkable but one might argue that rather than symbolizing P'eng-lai, the dragons might have been coiled into this shape because the gourd itself is already a symbol of immortality. Here the author could have adduced valuable data from two French studies. Maxime Kaltenmark (1953, p. 164) and Rolf Stein (p. 45-63) have written on the mythological symbolism of gourds (*kua*, *hu*, *hu-lu*) and calabash-shaped vases (*hu*): gourds are fruits of immortality like the peaches of the K'un-lun; they gave birth to the first man; they can be a boat carrying a hero to heaven (P'eng-lai is a floating gourd-vase); they are associated with creation, regeneration and fertility (the latter for the profusion of their pits). Stein (p. 54) examined the etymology of the words for gourd and vase and points out their affinity with a series of words describing primordial chaos (obscure, complete, hidden, unconscious, etc.), i.e. the gourd is a symbol of the embryonic primordial state of the universe which, over a century before Ma-wang tui, the *Tao te ching* exalted as the initial unity to which everything returns, and it is precisely for this reason that gourds became associated with the paradises of the immortals. It therefore makes good sense to see the Countess pass, on her way to heaven, through a state of "return to the origin" and regeneration, symbolized by the gourd-shaped coils surrounding her progress.

The horizontal celestial part of the painting is less controversial. There we have, to the right, the nine red suns in what is generally interpreted to be the mythical Fu-sang tree in the east. Loewe (p. 50-51) does not want to apply the myth of the ten suns to this scene because only nine suns are visible. Sofukawa (p. 137 sq.) reasons that, since one sun should always be circulating, it should be normal that only nine suns are always stationed in the tree. To the left we see the moon above a dragon bearing a woman on its wing. Whether this woman is the moon goddess Ch'ang-o or the Countess, depends on the interpretation one gives to the beautiful serpent-tailed figure in the center of heaven, dominating the whole painting from above (and decorating the cover of the book). This central figure could be Fu Hsi, Nü Kua or the fiery dragon Chu Lung. Loewe tentatively suggests a fourth identification: it could be the Countess herself who has reached her heavenly destination, "sloughing off her mortal coil as easily as a snake sheds the skins that he discards" (p. 59). The charm of this idea is that it would permit to see in the painting three stages of the Countess' transformation: Loewe sees her first in her coffin under the table of the lower banquet scene (no. 8) surrounded by two plus three large vessels; then revived, complete with walking stick, on the second platform (no. 5) accompanied by two plus three attendants and, finally, as the serpent-tailed immortal in heaven with two birds to her right and three birds to her left. There is, however, as Loewe points out, no proof, and the central figure on the other banner from tomb no. 3 is too unclear to decide whether or not it is a man, as it should be in the tomb of a man, if this figure represents the deceased.

Again throughout this chapter the term "immortality" is used rather vaguely. In most cases the author means it to refer to an afterlife in heaven, a state aspired to after death and depicted in tomb decorations as a pious wish for the deceased. Is there a word in Chinese to express this concept? What we usually translate as immortality are expressions that have the same meaning as the English word (*immortalis* = undying, deathless) and were taken much more literally in China than they ever were in Europe: *pu lao pu szu*, "non-aging, non-dying", *yang sheng pu szu*, "nourish life in order not to die", etc. (Needham, V, 2, p. 94). What is translated

as immortal is *hsien*, a transcendent deathless creature, a state accessible to mortals who follow regimens that make them *avoid* death. Needham has shown how developed these ideas were already in the middle of the second century BC. E.g. the *Yuan yu* poet learns methods to become immortal (from the most popular Han immortal Ch'ih-sung, Master Red Pine, who appears in the book) before embarking on his journey to heaven where he arrives without going through death (Needham, V, 2, p. 84-103).

Even if deathless immortality was already a conscious ideal, it is possible that the same belief inspired the symbolism of the funerary banners. But there is a contradiction here and a confusion between the dead and the immortals. We will come back to this question below.

The author's chapter on the Ma-wang tui banner is an exemplary presentation of all other studies up to 1977 as well as an original and stimulating new interpretation of the painting's symbolism. Sofukawa's and Hou's more recent examinations, while adding some insight, present no solutions convincingly contradicting the author's views. The dearth of source material on Han mythology, while increasing the unique value of the banner, might make an entirely satisfactory explanation of its meaning impossible until further archeological discoveries are made. Meanwhile the topic continues to attract interest. Jean M. James is said to have presented, at the "Midwest Conference on Asian Affairs" (Oct. 1980), a paper on "A New Interpretation of the Banners from Tomb 1 and 3, Mawangdui, Changsha".

### III. *TLV cosmology and Han divination*

The relatively short chapter on "TLV mirrors and their significance" (p. 60-85) is only the quintessence of a comprehensive study on TLV mirrors presented in more detail in six appendices to the book (p. 158-229). While causing some repetitions and overlap, this manner of presentation has the advantage that the reader finds in chapter III a convenient summary of all essential results, always with references to more scholarly data in the appendices.

The intriguing geometrical pattern on some Han mirrors resembling a concentric arrangement of four T, L and V shapes has

long since been recognized as a cosmological diagram. The author applies his expert knowledge of Han thought as well as of recent new finds of such mirrors to the riddle of the TLV pattern which had already challenged many scholars whose findings are summarized (p. 62-64). TLV mirrors are but one among several types of Han mirrors and have to be considered in the context of the general evolution of mirror patterns (p. 64-70). The origin of the TLV pattern still remains unknown but its evolution, its periods of perfection and subsequent decadence can now be discerned and dated with more precision. The author establishes a detailed typology of five major groups A, B, C, D and X with their subdivisions (chart, p. 69). This classification is only one of his original contributions to the study of TLV mirrors and presents a sound and eminently useful basis for further research. While no precise dating of particular pieces can be established, it is shown that the development from types A to X is consistent with the chronological pattern of intellectual change. The standard TLV mirror was en vogue roughly between 50 BC and AD 100-150 when it was eclipsed by new fashions, especially the high relief mirrors depicting the Queen Mother of the West.

The second new contribution to the subject is the author's inclusion of mirrors recently found in tombs (esp. the 118 bronze mirrors from the 225 Shao-kou graves near Loyang, cf. p. 212-221). Considering factors like the time that might have elapsed between a mirror's fabrication and its inclusion in a tomb, the value of these finds for dating mirrors is very cautiously evaluated (p. 212-213).

The following remarks on this rich chapter can be grouped under six headings:

- 1° TLV mirrors and cosmic boards
- 2° Irregularities in the TLV pattern
- 3° Trigrams on TLV mirrors
- 4° TLV mirrors and *liu-po* boards
- 5° Astral symbolism in mirrors
- 6° Mirrors as funerary objects

1° *TLV mirrors and cosmic boards.* As to the significance of the TLV symbolism, the reader finds again an instructive summary of previous interpretations (Karlgren, Kaplan, Yetts, Cammann,

Bulling, Hayashi) and the author's own ideas. They are a corroboration of Kaplan's remarks on the similarity to be found between the TLV pattern and the astronomical divining board known as the *shih*. Since the time Kaplan wrote (1937), several authentic specimen of these diviner's boards or "cosmic boards" (Harper) have been excavated and studied. Based on this new material, the author concludes that "the TLV mirrors, which bear some of the features that appear on the boards, were deliberately made as stylized versions of those instruments" (p. 80). Does this mean that the riddle of the TLV signs' origin and meaning is solved at last? Can it be proven that the TLV signs appeared first, as functional or symbolic markings, on the diviner's board and only later, as stylized decorations, on the mirrors? This is a question for the specialist of Han astronomy, calendar science and divination. I had the opportunity to discuss it with Marc Kalinowski, the author of the first comprehensive study on the cosmic boards. Uniquely qualified in this matter, M. Kalinowski was kind enough to contribute to this review a detailed response to the author's arguments which I have the privilege to present together with this review (inf. p. 114). The gist of his answer is that the early appearance of the TLV pattern on mirrors of the *Ts'ao-yeh* and *Shou-chou* types (Loewe's type A) *without* the cosmological background design precludes a direct derivation from the diviner's board. All that can be said is that both objects are roughly contemporary expressions of the same cosmological views. Moreover, the essential astronomical features of the boards, the constellation of the Big Dipper and the twenty-eight equatorial constellations, have never been transposed on a TLV mirror (they do figure on a Taoist mirror of the T'ang [cf. inf. p. 96] as well as on another T'ang mirror [Needham, III, fig. 93], both without TLV design).

As to the divinatory character of the TLV mirrors, the author states that the TLV design "exemplified the most favorable position that could be obtained by manipulating the two discs of the diviner's board" (p. 80). This idea is very attractive and I first adopted it as one more aspect of the sacred aura mirrors had at that time (Seidel, 1981, p. 239). However, Kalinowski explains that what the standard TLV pattern shows is invariably the normal starting position before any manipulation of the diviner's board

(north aligned with north, east with east, etc.). This is far from being the most favorable (p. 83-85) and certainly not a particular position resulting from a divinatory manipulation.

2° *Irregularities in the TLV pattern.* If TLV mirror patterns did express an especially favorable constellation resulting from a divinatory manipulation, then one should expect different mirrors to express different positions adapted either to specific situations or to some personal “horoscope” of the living or deceased owner of the mirror. Consequently it is the irregularity in TLV designs which deserves attention as a possible clue to a specific divinatory situation. The only such irregularity mentioned by the author is the varying starting position of the outer inscription. As Kalinowski points out, the observed preference to start the inscription in the north-east or in the north simply reflects the concept that the year cycle starts in these directions. Among the mirrors that start the inscription elsewhere one could single out the two mirrors that mention the Queen Mother of the West: C 5001 (starting position due west) and C 5002 (starting position south-west, i.e. at the cyclical character *shen*). This fact would rather suggest a relation between the starting position and the mythological symbolism of the design.

Another deviation from the standard pattern are the shifts that occur in the correlation of the different directional symbols:

a.) In mirror C 5001 (p. 184) the twelve Branches or chronograms in the central square are not aligned with the four directional animals — *tzu* (= north) is aligned with the tiger (= west), *yu* (= west) with the bird (= south), etc. Here a clockwise rotation of one quarter could adjust the twelve chronograms with the four animals. In mirror X 9003 (p. 189, Pl. XX) a counter-clockwise rotation of one quarter would result in the same adjustment. These displaced but adjustable arrangements would rather add weight to the similarity between TLV mirrors and diviner's boards suggesting, as they do, that the square center of the mirror was considered adjustable to different positions like the Heaven disc of the board. However,

b.) there are other displaced arrangements which cannot be adjusted, as when the positions of tiger and dragon (C 1201, C 1902, C 4111, X 1001), or those of bird and tiger (X 1009) are simply inverted.

These variations are mentioned by the author (p. 178-189) as “incorrect”, “erratic” or “misplaced” elements. One wonders if these frequent deviations from a simple and well-known rule were not rather deliberate arrangements suited to some specific divinatory or apotropaic purpose.

Surprising is also the author’s silence about the creatures other than the four emblematic animals depicted on the mirrors (p. 160). While it could still be argued that the irregularities mentioned above, comparatively rare as they are, might be simple errors, the constantly varying disposition of a limited number of mythical beasts and immortals in the middle band of the standard TLV mirrors might contain a message we should try to understand.

The T and L shapes cut each quadrant of a TLV mirror into two sections. Dragon, tiger, bird and tortoise-cum-snake are normally depicted in the right (or, seen in a clock-wise direction, first) half of their quadrant. (Some mirrors place some [C 4301] or all [C 4303] of them to the left). In the section not occupied by one of the four animals one finds other creatures, in order of their frequency: birds, unicorns, immortals, toads, leopards, deer, hares, bears and some hybrids difficult to identify. Although this is the feature that varies most from one mirror to another, it can not be regarded as a mere decoration devoid of meaning. A cursory examination of the 44 TLV mirrors with an eight-animals design in the Moriya collection (the plates in the book under review are not clear enough for this) reveals something of a pattern underlying the arrangement of these four intermediary creatures. E.g. feathered immortals are preponderately depicted in the east, facing the dragon, and in the north-east, also facing the dragon; in the south, they usually are shown astride a deer, and they never figure in the west except in mirror C 1902, a notable exception since in this mirror east and west are reversed. Birds abound in the south and the east, they are rare in the other quarters. Small quail-like birds, alone or in pairs, often sit anywhere between the T and L shapes, where one rarely also finds a toad (C 2103, 2101, C 4103 always in the north) or immortals (C 2101, 4102, 4103, D 1003 in the east, C 1206 in the west). A toad-like creature prefers the north (C 1902, 2203, 4302, D 2007, 2010) and is often difficult to distinguish (as in C 1305) from a winged animal with a long tail resembling a unicorn or a *pi-hsieh*

monster which is found most often in the west (C 2105, 2308, 2309, 3102, 4101, 4102, 4103, 4201). Similar creatures appear elsewhere in Han art.

As to the possible meaning of these creatures and their position in the mirrors, a standard pattern emerges. That immortals should prefer the east and south is clear. Immortals in the eastern section of the north can be understood as oriented to the east and reflecting a propitious beginning. The unicorn in the west may be a vestige of an older series of four animals where the *ch'i-lin* unicorn appeared in the west instead of the tiger. The toad, aquatic animal of the moon, is at its appropriate place in the north or north-west. Also what Cammann said about the dispositions of the numerous smaller birds in all four quadrants (*JAOS* 1948, p. 164-65) points to a standard pattern concording with the Yin-Yang and *wu-hsing* theories.

Since there seem to be no mirrors with, for example, *ch'i lin* unicorns in the east, immortals in the west, or toads in the south, it does seem unlikely, here again, that the positions of these creatures, despite their much more loose disposition, represent in any given mirror a definite shift in the whole pattern such as could be due to a divinatory manipulation.

TLV mirrors in tombs thus do not contain any specific message geared to the character or fate in life or afterlife of the particular occupant of the tomb. This does not exclude the possibility that one might find cosmological designs in tombs that do bear some relation to their owner. One such design, about three centuries older than TLV mirrors and cosmic boards, is presently under investigation. In July 1979 *Wen wu* (7, p. 40) published the painting on a lacquer box lid from the tomb of the Marquis of Tseng (burial date 433 BC). It depicts the seal script graph *tou* for the Big Dipper surrounded by the names of the twenty-eight equatorial constellations (*hsiu*). On this design it is not evident to which direction the Dipper handle points since the character *tou* that stands for it, is disposed in a way that its four prolongations simply mark off four groups of seven *hsiu*, indicating the four sections of heaven. However, under the equatorial constellation Gullet (*k'ang*) one finds inscribed the cyclical day designation *chia-yin* which, as the authors of the *Wen wu* article suggest, could designate the day of the Marquis' death (third

day of the fifth month of 433 BC). Their arguments are summed up, with less caution than they themselves display, by Donald Harper (1980-81, p. 49b).

3° *Trigrams on TLV mirrors.* None of the diviner's boards discovered in Han tombs include trigrams or hexagrams in their design. On the more elaborate diviner's board made of bronze, which specialists assign rather to the Six Dynasties' period (Loewe app. III, no. 6 of the chart p. 204-05), the four trigrams *ch'ien* ䷀ (NW), *ken* ䷀ (NE), *sun* ䷂ (SE) and *k'un* ䷁ (SW) appear in the four corners of the design, disposed according to the so-called *Hou-t'ien* arrangement.

From a *Shih-chi* passage mentioning the cosmic board we learn that the arrangement of the trigrams must have been part of the divinatory method using the board at the time of Ssu-ma Ch'ien if not already in the sixth century BC, which is the period of the story Ssu-ma Ch'ien relates (cf. Kalinowski, 1983).

On none of the TLV mirrors do we find any trigrams depicted in their usual form of broken and unbroken lines. However, Chang Cheng-lang has recently made the sensational discovery that certain hitherto undecipherable graphs found on oracle bones and bronze vessels are really archaic representations of trigrams and hexagrams. It so happens that TLV mirror X 9003 (p. 189 and Pl. XX) contains such graphs in the spaces between the L and T shapes (cf. fig. 2). The graph in the section of the bird and the chronogram *yin* (south? north-east?) is identical with the graph which Chang has deciphered as the trigram *k'an* (<|> equals ䷁). The other three sections show different variations of what must be called a "tetragram" (<||>, >||>, <||> equals ䷁). Since all the thirty-two instances of such graphs on oracle bones and bronzes collected up to now represent either three or six graphs, never four, and all of them, moreover, are at least six or seven centuries older than TLV mirrors, it is possible that the designer of mirror X 9003 used graphs of some other tradition (Yang Hsiung created, ca. AD 10, a system of 81 tetragrams, cf. Needham, II, p. 329) or he simply traced these figures as decorative devices matching the archaic and ornate style in which he wrote the outer inscription. However, all TLV mirrors or rather all Han mirrors should be carefully examined for similar graphs and their possible meaning before one adopts this *faute de mieux* explanation.

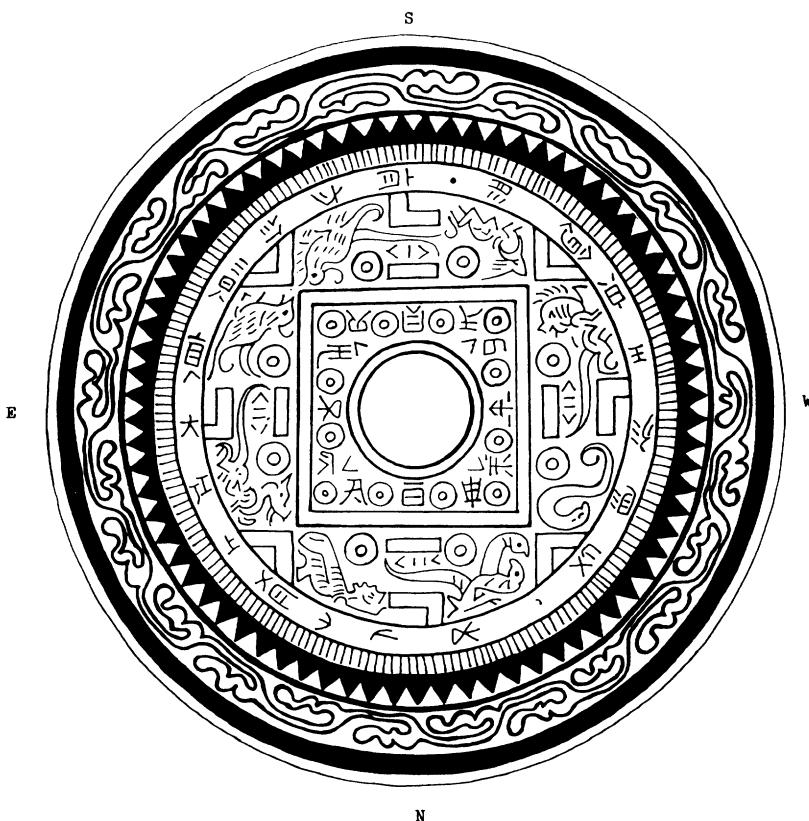


Fig. 2. TLV mirror X 9003 in Loewe's classification; Moriya collection no. 33; made from a positive mould.

The outer inscription runs anti-clockwise, starts in the south and is incomplete: "The Shang-fang made this mirror and truly it is very fine. Upon it are mountain men (= immortals) oblivious of old age. When they thirst they drink from the springs of jade, when they hunger they feed...". The chronograms of the inner inscription are displaced: *tzu* (normally = N) in the east, *yin* (= NEE) in the south, *wu* (= S) in the west, *yu* (= W) in the north.

Between the L and the T shapes (the latter lack their stems) are signs resembling the archaic hexagram graphs.

Besides the four directional animals there are: a bird in the south-east, a unicorn in the south-west, a (rare) snake in the north-west, and an unclear design of an immortal in the north-east.

Cf. Loewe, p. 189 and pl. XX; redrawn by the reviewer.

4° *TLV mirrors and liu po boards*. The similarity between the TLV pattern and the marks which appear on *liu po* game boards has been pointed out a long time ago. Scenes of this game being played by immortals or by human beings occur frequently in Han tomb reliefs as well as on one mirror where the scene is identified as: *hsien jen liu po* “Immortals (playing the game) *liu po*”. This inscription enabled Yang Lien-sheng to connect the TLV patterned game boards with the *liu po* game mentioned in texts (e.g. in the *Chao hun* poem, third cent. BC; cf. Yang, 1947, p. 204). Pursuing his idea of the TLV pattern’s origin, the author suggests “that the pattern derived from the diviner’s board... was transferred not only to mirrors, but also to other types of board that were used in divining; and they helped the players of *liu po* to interpret their throw” (p. 82).

Again, it is not clear if the diviner’s board can be considered the ancestor of a game board that seems to have been current at least as early as the third century BC. On the other hand, the author’s suggestion of a connection between the *liu po* game and divination (p. 84, 110) is expressed rather too cautiously. Yang Lien-sheng (1952, p. 138) has found indications that in Han and earlier times, ambitious human beings wished that they could play *po* games with deities, hoping to obtain magic powers by winning over them. Needham (IV, 1, p. 321) has shown that not only *liu po* but other games, variations of chess, were used for divination. The playing stones of “image chess” (*hsiang ch’i*), a later game said to have been invented by Emperor Wu of the Northern Chou (AD 561-578), were nothing other than a complex set representing celestial bodies, cyclical characters, trigrams, elements, etc. It looks as if “the position of the pieces at the outset differed according to the position of the celestial bodies and the situation of the cyclical characters at the time when play was begun”. The sources presented by Yang and Needham suggest a close kinship and even a blurred borderline between divination and games of chance played with symbols and rules derived from cosmological theories.

Needham (III, p. 304, fig. 125) has also discussed a scene depicting a game in the Wu-liang tomb shrine (cf. fig. 3). What he interprets as a diviner’s board in this scene (the middle table seen in profile, with a raised platform on its middle), could be either the table on which, in a *liu po* game, the six sticks are thrown (the “raised

platform" would then be the profile of the sticks) or else this mysterious table does represent a diviner's board and the magicians around it are engaged in divination as the *Shih chi* 127 describes it: "dividing the yarrow sticks, determining the trigrams, rotating the diviner's board and arranging the pieces" (*ch'i*, the same term that also denotes chess pieces, pawns; cf. inf., Kalinowski, p. 118).



Fig. 3. A scene of divination or of the *liu-po* game, with a TLV board in the background. From the Wu Liang tomb shrines (ca. AD 147), redrawn by Yetts, 1939, p. 149, fig. 38.

5° *Astral symbolism in mirrors.* The old mythological association between mirror and moon is well known. A sixth century source even speaks of a series of fifteen moon mirrors representing the phases of the moon, from a one inch (*ts'un*) mirror to a fifteen inch mirror "modeled on the number of the full moon" (*T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* 230, p. 21b). In T'ang times lunar mirrors were made representing the cassia tree, the alchemical hare, the dancing toad and the goddess of the moon.

The Taoists also had star mirrors. A beautiful specimen of the T'ang period has recently been unearthed in China (*Kaogu* 4, 1976) and discussed by Schafer who found an identical mirror represented in the *Taoist Canon* (*Tao tsang* fasc. 196, Harvard-Yenching Index no. 429). This Taoist astral mirror should be mentioned here because it has features in common with the TLV mirrors as well as with the diviner's board.

Like the TLV mirrors it contains: pictures of the four emblematic animals, the cyclical characters of the twelve Branches (interspersed with eight of the ten Celestial Stems), and an inscription which, considering its date (late 7th or early 8th century) is remarkably similar in tone to the TLV mirror inscriptions.

Like the diviner's board it contains: the image of the Big Dipper, represented by seven connected dots, north of the central knob (thus *not* in the center as it is positioned on the diviner's board), the twenty-eight equatorial constellations (*hsiu*), the twenty (12 + 8) Stem and Branch symbols for the compass directions and the eight trigrams in their conventional *hou t'ien* positions (as they figure on the Six Dynasties' diviner's board).

Features unique to the mirror are images of four deities, the discs of sun and moon south of the central knob and dots indicating the five planets. The pattern of the mirror consists of a central round star field around which a) the equatorial constellations, b) the cyclical signs and c) the inscription are disposed in three round concentric bands. *There is no TLV pattern.* Harper has pointed out (1978-79, p. 10) that this mirror shows the Big Dipper and the equatorial constellations as they are found on the heaven plate of the cosmic board "and we may quite confidently conclude that the heaven plate served as the prototype for the mirror". The only inconvenience in all this is that, since this is not a TLV mirror, the kinship between star mirror and diviner's board tells us nothing about the significance of the TLV pattern.

In a last effort to do justice to these mysterious TLV shapes, we might follow another line of thought. The first function of a mirror is to reflect the light of the sun. There are lunar and astral mirrors but the primary affinity of mirrors is with the light, i.e. with the sun. Many inscriptions exalt the mirror's radiant reflection of sun and moon, or mention the light of the sun (p. 192). Therefore the derivation of the TLV shapes from the design on Han sun-dials still seems the most plausible theory (which the author mentions without investigating it further, p. 71-72). The two preserved specimen of what must have been Han sun-dials both bear TLV markings (Needham, III, p. 305 sq.). The practical *raison d'être* of

the TLV shapes on the sun-dials has not yet been understood, but there is no doubt that it was of a functional, astronomical and not of a decorative nature. To copy these markings onto a mirror would express the affinity of the mirror with the sun's light and with fire.

The *Huai-nan tzu* (ca. 120 BC) mentions sun mirrors called *yang sui* and moon mirrors named *fang chu*. Needham (IV, 1, p. 87 sq.) identifies the *yang sui* as concave burning mirrors for igniting tinder from the sun's rays, the *fang chu* as dew pans for collecting dew when exposed to the full moon. But this is not all. Taoist texts are full of mirror meditations in some of which the right and the left eye of the adept become sun- and moon-mirrors which either reflect the astral numina in the sky or, turned inward, illuminate their divine reflections in his own body (Robinet, Kaltenmark, 1974).

Thus, the association mirror—sun light and the later Taoist homology eye—sun-mirror, together with the fact that the round face of the sun-dial is the only context in which the TLV shapes had an—as yet unexplained—practical function, makes it seem likely that Yetts was on the right track when he called TLV mirrors “sun-dial mirrors”. It might therefore be wise to postpone further TLV discussions until historians of science know more about the meaning of the markings on the sun-dial face.

6° *Mirrors as funerary objects.* It is clear from archeological evidence that the TLV mirror was, around the beginning of our era, “the characteristic talisman which was buried with the dead of the upper classes” (p. 101) and that mirrors with inscriptions mentioning the immortals were especially meaningful in a funerary context. However, the repeated reference, throughout the book, to TLV mirrors as funerary objects should not obscure the fact that most mirror inscriptions express good wishes that can only have been addressed to a living recipient. Of the fifteen representative inscriptions translated in appendix II (p. 192-203), ten express wishes of wealth, longevity, numerous prosperous progeny, long life for one's parents, renown in office, fame among scholars, prosperity of one's household; two wish to remember friends (one of them “as [long] as we see the light of the sun”), three wish “life as long as that of metal and stone”, a formula that appears elsewhere together with others of the above wishes, two other mirrors wish “life as long as the metals and stones that constitute the palladia of

the State" (p. 198-99: *kuo pao* is not "protector of the land" but the dynastic treasure of the empire). TLV mirrors were talismans made for the living and only secondarily included in the tombs of their owners.

Speaking of the late Han mirrors depicting the Queen Mother of the West and the King of the East (p. 122), the author comes back to the idea of a special funerary function which he finds expressed in the life-giving meeting of the two deities on the mirror. Here again the primary function of these mirrors as burial objects is open to doubt and, although both deities are on the same mirror, they do not meet—they sit very properly in their opposite quarters, the Queen in the West and the King in the East, symbolizing rather the orientation of the mirror like tiger and dragon of yore, and, as far as this reviewer has been able to see, never even turned toward each other, as the King is turning toward the Queen on some Han tomb reliefs (p. 130, fig. 22).

The funerary function of mirrors is further adduced as the reason why the mirror patterns lost their religious symbolism by the Wei and T'ang periods, when Buddhism and its "preference for cremation rather than interment tended to eliminate opportunities for the burial of mirrors as a talisman for the dead" (p. 123). This can scarcely have been the reason since a study of Buddhist cremation in China shows that it took many centuries for this practice to be accepted. The famous monk Hsüan-tsang (AD 602-664) was still interred and the laity did not practice cremation until the late T'ang period and never took to it on a large scale (Seidel, 1982, II). When the fashion in the world of the living was cosmic symbolism, we find TLV mirrors in the tombs; when the fashion of the world changed to the artistic decorative mirror patterns of the T'ang, we also find these mirrors in T'ang tombs.

#### IV. *The Queen Mother of the West (Hsi Wang Mu)*

The third and last study in the book deals with the myths and the iconography of the most popular deity in the late Han period. This deity is one facet of the very oldest and most powerful mythical figure of Chinese religions, the mother goddess and female demigurge. Mentioned already in oracle bone inscriptions (as Hsi

mu, Mother of the West), her cult is still alive today in Taiwan (Overmyer 1976, p. 238, n. 27; idem 1977). Although innumerable sources from before the Han until today refer to her popular myth and cult and although she was the favorite fairy queen of Chinese poets and painters, there is no substantial description of her before a late T'ang hagiography in the Taoist Canon. The study of her early career is therefore a difficult subject no one has yet tackled.

Relating pre-Han and Han texts to the recently discovered images of the Queen Mother of the West on mirrors and tomb reliefs, the author composes the first coherent picture of this magnificent goddess. His idea is that, around AD 100, the world view systematized by Tung Chung-shu more than 200 years earlier, came to be intellectually criticized by some (such as Wang Ch'ung) and to be supplemented by others with a "faith placed in the supremacy of certain unseen powers" (p. 86-87). This intellectual change he adduces as one of the reasons why we see, around AD 100, a first forceful impact of the Hsi wang mu myth on Han iconography.

The reader will find five major topics discussed in chapters IV and V:

1° References to the Queen Mother of the West, from the oracle bones to the *History of the Later Han*: a summary of the sources that mention Hsi wang mu and show her evolution from a mythical being with the tail of a leopard and the teeth of a tiger, to the divine Queen conferring immortality and living in a western paradise on or near Mount K'un lun.—Most of this is well known.

2° The deficiencies of Han cosmology and the search for deathlessness: Han Confucianism had no answers to the questions of death and Tung Chung-shu's system provided no bridges between the different realms of the cosmos. "The Queen's powers and intervention were sought as a means of acquiring immortality" and of communicating with heaven (p. 97). We also see, in the Han yearning for immortality, a gradual shift from eastern paradises in the sea to the western Mount K'un lun.—It would be too simple to explain this shift with Han Wu-ti's failure to find the elixir of the eastern sea islands (p. 97). It rather should be seen in the context of the contemporary shift of emphasis from aquatic deities to mountain deities, and of course together with the enlargement of the

western horizon through travel and military expeditions, as pointed out (p. 97-98). Also, Mount K'un lun, despite its north-western location, very early became a cosmic center, an axis mundi and a gateway to heaven, whereas from P'eng-lai no road lead further.

3° The soteriological movement of 3 BC: the religious craze that swept through the population of north-west China in 3 BC is the first incident that brought a popular Hsi wang mu cult to the notice of the historians. The three accounts of it (p. 98-99) are important early testimony of the kind of movement that, two centuries later, led to organized Taoism.

4° The iconography of the Queen: dated mirrors from the second century, tomb reliefs and decorated bricks from the second and third centuries yield a new and detailed picture of the Queen, of her attributes and escort. The author composes this picture relying on the excellent studies by Kominami Ichiro (1974) and Hayashi Minao (1973, 1974). The Queen can be recognized quite conveniently by her characteristic headdress, the *sheng*. She is seen seated on a kind of cosmic pillar or on a mountain which the author hesitates, perhaps overcautiously, to identify with Mount K'un lun. By the end of the Han, several mythological creatures of diverse provenance are seen grouped around her dragon-and-tiger throne: the hare, the toad and the three-legged bird (these lunar and solar animals are treated separately in the short chapter V), the nine-tailed fox of good omen, an armed guardian identified as Ta hsing po, immortals (sometimes engaged in the *liu po* game) as well as other figures in postures of supplication seemingly asking for the elixir of immortality.

The author dismisses as “perhaps too fanciful” (p. 110) the idea that the shape of the Queen's seat in the I-nan relief—three pillars arising from a single base (cf. fig. 4)—might be intended to form the character *shan* (mountain). On the contrary, this is quite likely. Another example of such a device can be seen in the astronomical design on the lacquer box lid of 433 BC (cf. sup. p. 92). There, the Big Dipper (surrounded by the twenty-eight equatorial constellations) is not, as later in Han drawings, depicted by the seven stars of the constellation but by the contemporary *graph* for *tou* = Dipper. The character magically naming a thing might have been considered to contain more of its essence than a mere drawing of its

outward appearance (cf. the chapter on the evolution of ideograms in Vandermeersch II, p. 473-97; Seidel, 1982, I, p. 321).

5° The myth of the seasonal meetings: Kominami, to whom the author expresses his indebtedness, has shed new light on the Hsi wang mu myth by comparing it with the myth of the Weaving Maid and the Oxherd, the two constellations, separated by the Milky Way, who meet only once (or twice) a year on the seventh day of the (first and the) seventh month. The author develops this very

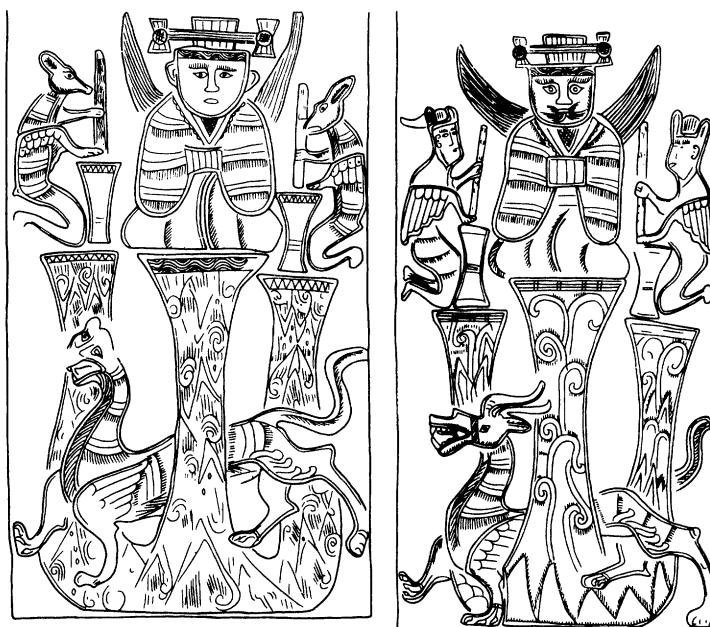


Fig. 4. Queen Mother of the West and King Father of the East; from reliefs in a tomb at I-nan, Shantung. Probably third century AD. Cf. description in Loewe, p. 110, 122 and fig. 21.

enlightening comparison which shows i.a. that the annual or bi-annual meetings of the two constellations have a deeper meaning in common with the theme of the Queen Mother's meetings with the King Father of the East (Tung wang kung), or with certain favored temporal rulers like King Mu of Chou and the Han Emperor Wu. They are to be seen as "part of a much larger and more important

myth. This myth saw the continuity of the universe as depending on two annual meetings that took place in summer and winter... so as to mark the progress of the annual cycle" (p. 119). The Queen Mother of the West and the King Father of the East become two cosmic forces whose periodic union operates the annual rebirth of the natural cycle. In the later (Six Dynasties) story of the Queen Mother's meetings with a Chinese monarch, her image as the lifegiving force in the annual cycle has evolved into that of a deity granting immortality and transmitting heavenly revelations in a setting that contains elements of contemporary Taoist ritual (p. 118).

The author's study of the Queen Mother of the West begins and ends with the myth of the seasonal meetings as its main theme. It is this myth which permits the fruitful comparison with other tales that express the interplay of cosmic forces through the meetings of various sets of partners. The myth bears, in its mature form, "on the maintenance of the cosmic order, the processes of rebirth within the world of nature and the attainment of immortality" (p. 87). The author suggests that it was the main reason why the Queen Mother of the West became so popular in the second century AD. But there is more to Hsi wang mu than that. The emphasis on her meetings with a male partner as a cosmic union of Yin and Yang obscures one minor theme, that is, the meaning of her meetings with human monarchs, and one major theme, which is what Kominami (quoting Eliade) calls her "androgyny".

The minor issue first: The story of the Queen Mother's meeting with King Mu is older than that of her being the partner of an eastern male deity, Tung wang kung. The story of her visit to the Han Emperor Wu attained its greatest popularity in the Six Dynasties period. Thus, the theme of the Queen Mother meeting human monarchs is older than the new theme of her partnership with a male deity and survived it. The two themes of annual meetings and that of her visit to an emperor intertwine when, p. ex. the meeting with Emperor Wu takes place on the seventh day of the first or the seventh month (p. 117, 120). But the issue in the second case is not a cosmic hierogamy but the meeting between a *deity* and a *human* being. The female nature of the deity here expresses her intermediary role, revealing celestial secrets to a human aspirant to

immortality. The seventh day of the first and seventh months is not only a day of male-female union but also of communication between Heaven and Earth, gods and mankind. Another important element in this legend is the failure of both King Mu and Emperor Wu to achieve immortality despite the extraordinary privilege of a personal audience with the Queen Mother: the divinely mandated mediator between Heaven and Earth, the Son of Heaven, fails in the task in which the earnest seeker of immortality, though merely his subject, can succeed.

The author could not possibly have elaborated all the facets of the Queen Mother of the West in Han and Six Dynasties beliefs without doubling the volume of his book. But the major feature of Hsi wang mu's "androgyny" or rather her unpartnered supremacy over the cosmos would have deserved more attention especially since the real root of her cosmic powers is probably not to be found in her interplay with a Yang force but in her very obscure role as a primordial cosmic demigurge and mother goddess. It is this facet that might be the oldest strand of her myth as well as the most enduring, since the modern syncretist religions that still venerate her (as Hsi wang mu or as Lao mu, Sheng mu, cf. Overmyer 1976, p. 139) stress her role as cosmic creator (or rather procreator) and as cosmic mother who does not unite with Yang but gives birth to Yin and Yang.

In this sense the Queen Mother of the West participates in a mythical complex that includes Nü kua, the mother of the god Lao chün, etc. as well as all the later Holy Mothers of popular religions since the Sung. This motif might even include the very problematic unsolved mysteries in the first chapter of the *Tao teh ching* ("the Beginning [*shih*] of Heaven and Earth" written with the radical "woman"—and "the Mother that rears the ten thousand creatures") as well as in the sixth chapter (the female "Valley Spirit" which is "the base from which sprang Heaven and Earth").

All this, of course, goes far beyond a chapter on the Han iconography showing ways to paradise. Staying within the limits of this subject, Kominami has devoted some thought to this matter and stresses, besides the fact (mentioned also by the author) that she was originally alone in pre-Han sources, that

1° in Han reliefs Hsi wang mu is more often alone than a partner to Tung wang kung (Kominami, p. 67),

2° among the Queen's attributes are several that symbolize not a pure Yin nature but Yin and Yang (Kominami, p. 68-69):

- a) the simultaneous presence of the lunar hare and toad together with the three-legged solar bird. Loewe (p. 130-31) sees the three-legged bird as a variant of the three grey birds that serve the Queen.
- b) Her throne is often not a mountain or pillar but a seat composed of a dragon and a tiger, a linkage in which Loewe very justly sees an expression of “the idea of omnipotence and continuity that is achieved by the fusion of the two forces” (of Yin and Yang, p. 105, cf. also pl. I).
- c) Her headdress, the *sheng*, identified as a tool for weaving (Loewe, p. 105), is another symbol of a complementary nature. Although one could say that in the case of the Weaving Maid and the Oxherd, the weaving is a female activity complementary to the male tending of lifestock (sericulture-agriculture), the Queen Mother's weaving has no male counterpart. She is the female weaver of cosmic order, as a difficult but important passage in the *Huai-nan tzu* suggests (Loewe, p. 95). This passage, where the Old [Woman] of the West (Hsi lao) snaps her *sheng* headdress, creating cosmic catastrophes, has to be seen together with other fragments of this myth where, by breaking her *sheng* or forsaking her loom, the woman artisan (*nü kung*) creates havoc in government or extinguishes the light in the universe (Kominami, p. 69).

These elements are not isolated irregularities in the myth of a cosmic hierogamy but glimpses of the more fundamental essence of Hsi wang mu. The author quotes an intriguing text (*Hsüan-chung hsiang chuan*, ca. AD 1602) said to contain lost parts of the *Lieh-hsien chuan*, where the Queen Mother of the West, with the King of the East, is described as “creator of heaven and earth, moulder of all things that are created, mistress acknowledged by all those who ascend to heaven or descend to earth” (p. 124). After a futile search for this text I found an almost identical passage in the hagiography

of the Queen Mother by Tu Kuang-t'ing (AD 850-933; *Tao tsang* 560, HY 782.1.9b), a passage where it is also the cosmic couple who together mould all things. In another passage of Tu Kuang-t'ing's work it appears that the primordial role of the mother demiurge had, in his time, been taken over by the more recent goddess, the Holy Mother of the god Lao chün:

"Some believe that it is she who is the greatest and the most venerable.  
 She controls Heaven and Earth,  
 harmonizes Yin and Yang,  
 employs Wind and Rain as her servants.  
 She makes the five planets advance and retreat,  
 she arranges the cold and the heat,  
 wields power over *Ch'ien* and *K'un*  
 and rules over all immortals of the three realms.  
 Life and death of men,  
 rise and decline of generations,  
 all proceed from her.  
 It is from the Holy Mother of Lao chün  
 that Heaven, Earth and all beings have received life."

(*Tao tsang* 560, HY 782.1.8b-9a)

Since the Mother of the West, already mentioned in an oracle bone inscription, might be the oldest of all these demiurge motherdeities and since it is clear that her "marriage" with the King of the East occurred only in the late Han and never diminished her cosmic powers, one could wonder if the above passage does not describe what was originally the supreme primordial nature of the Queen Mother of the West.

#### V. *More questions concerning the afterlife*

The three different kinds of funeral artifacts discussed in this book all express the longing for an afterlife in a paradise beyond the tomb. The author's wish to investigate ways to paradise presided at their choice. In the case of the TLV mirrors we have seen that their funeral function as talismans on the way to paradise is only one possible reason for inclusion in the tomb, since their inscriptions seem to destine them primarily for use by the living who then might take them also into their last resting place. In fact, the majority of Han funeral objects were not symbolic roads signs for a further journey to a paradise but artifacts reproducing and symbolizing an afterlife in the tomb itself which was first of all a *residence*. How else

could one explain the presence of all the replicas of buildings, servants and livestock, of coffers filled with textiles, textscrolls, seed grain, game boards, lacquer bowls, bronze vessels, lamps and mirrors, etc. (for the contents of the Ma wang tui tombs, see p. 25-27). The author discusses this function of the tomb and explains it as the attempt to keep the remaining vital force (*p'o*), which accompanies the body to the grave, provided with all it might need for a comfortable existence with the body, and to prevent it from straying (p. 12-13). While the *p'o* should thus reside in the tomb, the intelligent and more spiritual force of man, the *hun*, had to be provided with symbols intended to escort the “soul” to some land of immortals. Thus, the painting on the banner, the mention of immortals on the mirrors and the pictures of the Queen Mother of the West all concern the fate of the *hun*. At the risk of pressing the logic of these definitions too far, the question may be asked why these escorts for the journey of the *hun* were included in the tomb which received the body after the *hun* had departed from it and after all ritualized efforts to call it back (*chao hun*) had failed.

Indeed, a clear separation of a *p'o*, appeased with the wealth included in the tomb, from a *hun* departed to heavenly realms is not possible. It is contradicted by the funerary cult of the Han, which, as Doris Croissant has shown, included periodic sacrifices (of the *chi li* category addressed only to pure benevolent *shen* spirits) in a small temple (*tz'u t'ang*) erected *at the tomb site*. These sacrifices were made to the *hun*. It would be interesting to know if the pictures of the Queen Mother of the West and other paradise scenes were located in parts of the tomb destined for the cult of the *hun*. The tradition of the *tz'u t'ang* tomb shrines is attested for the region of Shantung. In the southern Ch'ang-sha, where the funeral banner of the Countess of Tai was found on top of the innermost coffin *inside* the tomb, other rites might have prevailed. The latter would corroborate existing evidence for the presence of the *hun* also inside the tomb. Wang Ch'ung (AD 27-97) castigates the prevailing custom to bury food in the tombs in order to “please the spirit” (*ching hun*).

One striking fact is that, of all the Han texts which the author quotes to explain the meaning of the banner, the mirrors or the Queen Mother of the West, not one concerns the afterlife of the dead (with the possible exception of the *Chao hun* poem). In other

words, we did not, for example, know about any connection between the Queen Mother of the West and the cult of the dead before Hsi wang mu pictures were actually found in tombs. She was a kind of mythical monster who became, in the second century AD, a Queen of the immortals, *not* of the souls of the dead. Not one text speaks of any soul of a deceased and buried human being ascending to her paradise. This quite extraordinary realisation leads to the question as to how, if not in terms of paradises, the afterlife of the dead was described in Han texts. A few such passages exist and they hint at a completely different fate awaiting the deceased. They are not too difficult to understand since they represent the first glimpses of beliefs that were to become common in the Six Dynasties period where we find them in countless popular tales and in Taoist texts. A reader for whom *Ways to Paradise* is the first introduction to Han religions might assume that all souls were believed to go to heavens like the one depicted on the banner, or to paradises like the one of the Queen Mother of the West. It is therefore useful to briefly summarize basic ideas concerning the netherworld that can be dated before the end of the second century AD (many of them are to be found in Maeno, 1961).

The oldest *locus classicus* for the fate of the dead is a story in the *Tso chuan* (dated about 721 BC). There the home of the dead are the “Yellow Springs” (*huang ch’üan*), a shadowy subterranean abode not too far beneath the earth (Needham, V, 2, p. 84-85), comparable to the Greek Hades. In the second century BC this belief was still current since a son of the Han Emperor Wu speaks of it in a sad chant before his suicide: the Yellow Springs below are sad and dark, they cannot be avoided since man must die; a summons from a place called Kao-li has to be obeyed since victims of death can send no proxy... (*Han shu* 63; Needham, *ibid.*; Maeno I, p. 43).

There were also early beliefs in a separation of “flesh and bones which revert to the earth” from “the soul (*hun ch’i*) that roams around everywhere” (*Li chi*, Maeno I, p. 41). The *Huai-nan tzu* (ch. 7) speaks of “bones returning to earth and souls (*ching shen*) entering heaven”. He describes four palaces in heaven (ch. 3) which “oversee (the administration of) recompenses and punishments”. This might be the earliest allusion to a judgment in the afterlife. A funerary chant called *Kao-li* explains that the *hun* and *p’o* souls of

sages and fools alike have to go there. Kao-li is the name of one of the lower peaks around Mount T'ai in Shantung. Another Han poem (*Yüan shih hsing*) laments that human life cannot be prolonged; all men wherever they roam in the four directions all are tied to the registers in Mount T'ai, and in the middle of life's joy suddenly they have to return to the Eastern Peak (= Mt. T'ai; Maeno I, p. 43). In later tales, the "registers" in Mount T'ai turn out to be the archives of the tribunals that judge the dead. A late Han magician tells of his pilgrimage to Mount T'ai when he was ill. He made a petition to (the god of the mountain) concerning his lifespan (*Hou Han shu*; Ngo, 1976, p. 111).

In the third and fourth centuries stories abound on the way of the souls to the subterranean empire inside Mount T'ai. Maeno points out several tales in which the realm where the dead exist is limited to a house and to their clan, i.e. their tomb and those of their family already buried there. In these stories he sees a preliminary stage to a more complex organisation of the netherworld in a society modeled on the Han administration and situated in Mount T'ai. In this context it is interesting to note that a late Han tomb in Wang tu (Hopei) symbolizes not only the residence of the deceased but very manifestly his *office*, complete with doorkeepers (whose titles are taken from Han administrative nomenclature) and rows of officials paying their respects. Discussing this tomb, Croissant suggests that, since the tribunal of the shades in Mount T'ai is not yet fully developed in the Han period, individual tombs endowed with all the signs of rank and honor (some of them posthumously bestowed) might have played the role of the netherworldly residence *and* yamen which we find later in Mount T'ai, where deceased judges continue to pronounce sentence, deceased criminals meet their punishment, while others might simply have existed there with all the comfort with which their surviving descendants had endowed their tombs.

As far as all these beliefs are concerned, the two Han dynasties are a complex period of transition. Great changes become manifest around and after the collapse of the empire. Taoists perfected techniques to avoid death and those who died went to have their netherworldly fate settled in the registries and offices of Mount T'ai. These changes were not abrupt. Deathlessness was an ideal in

the second century BC, Kao-li and Mount T'ai are mentioned in laments on death by Han poets. Both themes do not owe anything to the arrival of Buddhism (in the first and second centuries AD).

As to the Taoist techniques, we have repeatedly stumbled over the unclear concept of immortality which does not do justice to the elaboration of methods to bypass death. This vagueness in fact obscures a major question that should have been asked in this book: why does one find the paradises and deities of the *immortals* (as well as other such tokens, like the pottery birds with elixir vessels on their wings, cf. Needham, V, 2, p. 113) in the tombs of those who have not succeeded to avoid death? Are the pictures of heaven on the banner and of the Queen Mother's paradise on the tomb reliefs only a wishful afterthought, magically invoking an unattainable apotheosis for the deceased who did not succeed to preserve himself intact and whose scattered vital forces and souls will now have to join the dark world of the shades? Or was there, in the Han period, a belief that these celestial regions can be reached after passing through the disintegration of physical death? There is evidence, considerably later, for both of these possible explanations. Some centuries later Taoism evolved means to make the souls of the dead pass through a purifying "smelting" in a kind of purgatory located in the south (= fire), in order to enable them to ascend as immortals. The "wishful afterthought" theory can be illustrated with a very far fetched comparison taken from Japanese Buddhism: in medieval Japan, the funerary procession took the coffin through all stages of the Buddhist way, from the first Bodhisattva vow to the ultimate Awakening, enacting symbolically what the deceased should have done in his lifetime (and should do in his future incarnations; cf. Seidel, 1982, II, p. 582-84).

This discrepancy between the netherworldly fate of the dead as it was conceived according to the texts and the visions of immortals' paradises found in the tombs, seems to me the most interesting problem resulting from the study under review. Further research on Han funerary cults should investigate the possibility that Han tombs contain, besides tokens of immortality, some objects that point to the beliefs in a more or less organized netherworld. The tomb in Wang tu is already an administrator's office. Also, Han tombs already contain coffers filled with clay replicas of gold coins

(Loewe, p. 27), the kind of spirit money which sources from the sixth century AD explain as being intended to pay (or bribe) the administrators in the world of the dead (cf. Hou Ching-lang, 1975; Seidel, 1978). Such objects might clarify the stages of the transition from the Chou period's Yellow Springs to the later administration of the shades in Mount T'ai. They might even tell us how the theme of immortality fits into the Han vision of the life after death.

The tide of new archeological discoveries in China and of their presentation in an increasing number of Chinese books, journals and exhibitions shows no signs of abating. Han concepts of immortality are but one among a multitude of major topics that can be elucidated, as never before, by this wealth of new material. The author's skillful selection and meaningful correlation of pictorial and textual sources as well as the clarity and depth of his inquiry provide an exemplary model which should encourage and inform all further endeavors to evaluate archeological evidence in order to revise and complete our knowledge of China's past. The actuality of his subject and the success of his masterful study are evidenced by the number of reviews being written on it (Finsterbusch, Cahill). Furthermore, *Ways to Paradise* vividly demonstrates how valuable such studies can be not only to the sinologist but to all students of archeology, religion, folklore, art history and history of science.

#### VI. *Remarks on details*

- p. 12 note 22 belongs somewhere higher up in the text since the passage in Maspero to which reference is given, does not mention jades or the sealing of body orifices.
- p. 64 point 2 speaks of two TLV mirrors made from a positive instead of a negative mould. The Museum of Hanoi has what is possibly a third, cf. Vandermeersch, 1960, p. 12 no. 18.289 and pl. VII (other TLV mirrors, *ibid.*, pl. VIII-XI, XIV). A fourth one is mirror X 9003, cf. above, fig. 2.
- p. 122: In what way does the shape of the jade pillow from Wang tu indicate "that the Queen of the West and the King of the East together hold the cosmos in their keeping"? Elsewhere (legend of pl. XXI) it is doubted, perhaps with reason, if this scene really represents Hsi wang mu at all.

- p. 134 note 5: Another valuable attempt to treat the *Huai-nan tzu* to critical scholarly examination is the little known German translation and study of chapters 1 and 2 by Eva Kraft, *Monumenta Serica* 16 (1957) p. 191-286; 17 (1958) p. 128-207.
- p. 146 note 49 to the text on p. 74 refers the reader to explanations on the selfsame p. 74 where this note figures (?).
- p. 148 note 6 refers to Kominami, p. 75 note 13 (not 11).
- p. 151 note 76: In the mirror design reproduced by Hayashi (1973) p. 39 (not p. 38), fig. 32, the positions of the Queen Mother of the West and the Lord King of the East are indeed reversed, but so are those of the Dragon (with the Lord of the East) and the Tiger (with the Queen of the West). Here again, the simple statement that they are situated “incorrectly” might have to be reconsidered, in case we do find one day a key to the numerous “irregularities” in cosmological mirror patterns.
- p. 187 mirror X 1009: The text of the outer inscription starts between tortoise and dragon, i.e. in the north-east.

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#### APPENDIX:

#### REMARQUES SUR LES MIROIRS TLV DANS LEUR RAPPORT AVEC LES TABLES *LIU-JEN*

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La parution récente de l'étude que M. Loewe a consacré aux miroirs TLV constitue à ce jour la plus importante contribution faite sur ce sujet. Tant par la présentation et l'étude minutieuse des travaux antérieurs que par le large éventail des pièces offertes à l'attention du lecteur, nous sommes ici en présence d'un ensemble appelé à fournir le préliminaire indispensable à toute investigation future des problèmes posés par ce type de miroirs. Dans un tel contexte, il est dommage que l'auteur se soit engagé outre mesure dans une analyse de l'origine et de la signification des motifs décoratifs représentés sur les miroirs en relation quasiment exclusive avec les tables de divination (*shih*) du type *liu-jen* (désignées par l'auteur au moyen du seul terme *shih*, "diviner's board") à la description desquelles est consacré l'*Appendice trois* de son ouvrage. Ce qui chez Kaplan (1937) n'était qu'une simple constatation fondée sur la similarité du symbolisme propre à ces deux types d'objets et chez Needham (*Volume III*, p. 305) un simple compte-rendu parmi d'autres de l'hypothèse de Kaplan, revêt chez Loewe la forme d'une parenté si étroite que le lecteur est porté, d'une

part, à considérer les miroirs TLV comme une simple version stylisée des tables *liu-jen* et, d'autre part, à en interpréter le symbolisme en relation univoque avec celui présenté par ces instruments mantiques.

Après avoir défini le miroir standard comme étant du type de ceux qui furent fabriqués entre -50 et +150 environ (catégorie C, “regular type”), l'auteur tente de montrer que ce miroir standard représentait l'ajustement le plus favorable des deux plateaux d'une table *liu-jen* et qu'il était par conséquent conçu comme une version stylisée de ces instruments, ayant pour fonction de perpétuer le souvenir de l'ajustement obtenu. Or, comme nous allons le voir dans un instant, rien ne permet d'assigner aux miroirs TLV la fonction de fixer pour l'éternité le résultat d'un pronostic divinatoire quel qu'il soit, pas plus que les similitudes discernables dans le symbolisme commun à ces deux types d'objets n'autorise à tracer une ligne d'influence directe entre eux.

Par définition, la manipulation d'une table *liu-jen* à des fins divinatoires aboutit pour chaque demande d'oracle à un dispositif spécifique des éléments inscrits sur les deux plateaux de l'appareil. Si les miroirs TLV avaient eu pour fonction de représenter d'une manière ou d'une autre un ajustement particulièrement favorable d'une table de divination, il va de soi que ceux-ci accuseraient ici ou là des différences significatives dans la répartition de leur éléments constitutifs. Comme on peut s'en rendre compte en parcourant les nombreux exemplaires reproduits par l'auteur et la nomenclature générale des miroirs existants donnée dans l'*Appendice deux*, il n'en est rien. Les marques TLV, les bosses et autres motifs décoratifs forment une structure géométrique quasiment immuable; la série des douze *branches terrestres* est toujours répartie sur le pourtour du carré selon les critères universellement reconnus sous les Han, tels qu'ils furent fixés dans les premières décennies de l'empire et probablement dès le troisième siècle avant notre ère par les calendriers rituels du type *Yüeling*, des ouvrages comme le *Huai-nan tzu*, le *Ch'un-ch'iu fan-lu* et une multitude de traités connexes moins importants (*tzu* = Nord, *chou* = N-NE, etc.); les représentations zoomorphes et tout particulièrement les animaux emblématiques *szu-shen* des quatre secteurs de l'espace sont toujours identifiables et leur position est là aussi pratiquement invariable (dragon = Est, oiseau = Sud, tigre = Ouest, tortue = Nord). Selon l'auteur, les quelques variantes constatées dans la répartition de ces divers éléments sur les miroirs du type standard sont à imputer, soit à des vices de fabrication pour les modèles authentiquement Han, soit à une erreur de datation pour les copies tardives de miroirs d'époque, mais en aucun cas à une volonté du fabricant de rendre compte d'un agencement particulier obtenu à l'aide d'une table *liu-jen*. A. Seidel qui, dans le présent compte-rendu,

s'est efforcée de faire ressortir ce que ces quelques variantes avaient malgré tout de significatif, à identifié deux cas (C5001, X9003) où l'agencement représenté pourrait témoigner de l'apport d'un procédé divinatoire apparenté au *shih*. Ce qui est déjà peu dans le seul contexte des variantes existantes le devient d'autant plus au regard de l'important corpus des miroirs standards sur lesquels se fonde avant tout le jugement émis par l'auteur. N'apportant lui-même aucune preuve venant étayer son hypothèse de départ, on comprend difficilement pourquoi il a jugé bon d'en faire état.

On pourrait bien sûr supposer que l'“ajustement favorable” que les fabricants de miroirs cherchaient à reproduire était celui où les deux parties des tables *liu-jen* se trouvaient en position neutre, de telle sorte que les éléments communs aux deux plateaux soient répartis les uns face aux autres. Dans ces conditions, les données portées sur l'instrument n'offrent aucune caractéristique particulière. A l'instar des miroirs TLV, elles se bornent à reproduire le dispositif classique défini par la théorie des correspondances au début des Han. De plus, cet ajustement spécifique (que les manipulateurs des tables *liu-jen* nomment “résonnance cachée” *fu-yin*), n'apportant au devin aucune des oppositions d'aspects nécessaires à l'établissement de son pronostic, est en général considéré comme plutôt néfaste: “Dans cette position, les esprits mensuels (éléments portés sur la partie circulaire des *shih*, cf Loewe, p. 206 -b-) sont tous à leur place (sur les cases correspondantes de la base carrée), les aspects propres aux *branches* et aux *troncs* (*idem*, -c-) ne sont pas en opposition.... Aucun choix n'est possible.... Il ne convient ni de sortir de chez soi, ni d'entreprendre une action car elle serait vouée à l'échec” (*Huang-ti chin-k'uei yü-heng ching*, p. 9b-10a, *Tao-tsang* 135, HY 284).

Le seul argument pouvant d'une certaine façon témoigner de l'utilisation d'un procédé mantique dans la conception des miroirs TLV réside dans le fait que le début des inscriptions disposées en général en rond autour du carré central varie d'un exemplaire à l'autre. Il n'est pas impossible ici qu'on ait fait appel au devin pour décider de l'endroit précis (par rapport au carré central) où il convenait d'entamer le défilement de cette inscription qui constitue, précisons-le, le seul élément personnalisé à figurer sur les miroirs. Etant donné que sur les quatre-vingt dix inscriptions analysées par l'auteur, près de la moitié (trente-sept) commence dans le coin Nord-Est du carré (*branche yin*, premier mois du printemps, début de l'année civile sous les Han), il y a tout lieu de supposer que le fabricant choisissait dans la plupart des cas l'endroit qui lui semblait le plus propice à être utilisé comme point de départ. Pour le reste, même s'il avait éprouvé la nécessité d'avoir recours à un procédé mantique quelconque,

rien ne permet d'affirmer qu'il eut fait appel à une table *liu-jen* plutôt qu'à l'achilléomancie ou à l'une ou l'autre des multiples techniques divinatoires en usage sous les Han.

Passons maintenant à la question du symbolisme commun aux miroirs TLV et aux tables *liu-jen*. Les motifs inscrits sur les miroirs sont habituellement répartis en deux catégories: la trame TLV et le décor de fond. Ce dernier, d'après la périodicité établie par l'auteur, accuse une évolution que nous résumerons de la manière suivante: 1) les miroirs pré-standards (types A et B) dont la caractéristique est l'absence d'éléments symboliques en relation directe avec la théorie classique des correspondances (miroirs *ts'ao-yeh* et *shou-chou*); 2) les miroirs standards auxquels nous avons déjà fait allusion; 3) les miroirs post-standards qui utilisent des éléments symboliques sous une forme altérée et non conforme à l'usage Han (type X). Les miroirs du type D, dont la principale irrégularité est l'omission de la formule personnalisée, représentent une catégorie intermédiaire entre le type C et le type X. Bien entendu, les décors de fond peuvent être ou non assortis de la trame TLV, quelle que soit la période envisagée.

Comme on a pu le constater, c'est par l'intermédiaire des miroirs standards que l'auteur tente d'établir une filiation avec les tables *liu-jen*. Ceci nous amène en premier lieu à l'affirmation suivante que la tradition des miroirs TLV n'est pas liée en ses origines aux tables de divination, mais seulement à partir de la fin des Han antérieurs, date à laquelle commencent à apparaître les premiers miroirs du type standard. Par ailleurs, l'hypothèse d'un rapport fonctionnel entre les tables de divination et les miroirs (à la manière du lien qui lie le résultat d'une opération mathématique à la règle à calculer qui a permis de la réaliser) étant sans fondement, l'existence d'un symbolisme commun à ces deux sortes d'objets n'illustre, en dernier ressort, que le fait qu'ils sont contemporains l'un de l'autre (les découvertes archéologiques n'ont jusqu'à ce jour jamais démontré le contraire; cf D. Harper 1980-1981, p. 48). C'est à la lumière de la structure de l'idéologie Han et de ses systèmes de représentations dont l'auteur trace les grandes lignes dans son chapitre introductif que doit être interprétée la similitude des motifs portés, ici sur les miroirs TLV, là sur les tables de divination *liu-jen*. Tout particulièrement durant cette période d'effervescence qu'a constitué la formation de l'empire chinois, il n'est pratiquement pas de domaine (institutionnel, rituel, scientifique, artistique ou philosophique) qui n'ait moulé son discours et ses théories sur une conception du monde dont les miroirs Han se sont eux aussi faits l'écho. C'est pourquoi, s'il est clair que les deux types d'objets qui nous intéressent ici sont révélateurs d'un univers mental commun, rien ne prouve par contre qu'il existe entre eux une relation d'influence mutuelle ou d'emprunt réciproque, ni sur le plan fonctionnel, ni sur le plan symbolique.

Venons-en maintenant à la trame TLV. Nous l'avons vu, sa présence sur les miroirs n'est pas liée à un décor de fond particulier; tous les types existants s'en accommodent. Cette indépendance est encore accentuée par le fait que la trame se retrouve telle quelle sans aucun décor de fond sur les plateaux *liu-po* (reproduction in Needham, *Volume III*, p. 304 et *figure 127*). Signalons à ce propos que le seul lien difficilement discutable entre les tables de divination (*liu-jen*?) et la trame TLV nous est fourni par un motif pictural Han (site funéraire de Wu Liang, + 147 environ; Needham, *idem*, p. 314) représentant deux personnages occupés à manipuler un objet identifié à juste titre comme une table de divination tout en ayant à proximité un plateau *liu-po*. Il n'est pas impossible que la manipulation des tables de divination était alors liée à ce type de plateau qui servait au devin de support pour y disposer des pions chargés de représenter les résultats du comput entrepris (cf aussi le *Shih-chi* qui évoque l'usage du *shih* en ces termes: *hsüan-shih cheng-ch'i* “faire pivoter le *shih* et disposer les pions [sur un support]”; chapitre 127, p. 3218 de l'édition de Pékin). Dans la mesure où la trame TLV est ici concernée, le lecteur aurait aimé avoir une discussion plus précise sur ce point. Tout comme il se serait attendu à trouver une étude détaillée des causes de la présence de cette même trame sur les cadrans solaires Han (reproduction in Needham, *Volume III*, p. 306, *figure 128*) et de la relation éventuelle entre ces instruments et le report des marques TLV sur les miroirs. La solution de l'énigme posée par ces cadrans solaires est actuellement la seule voie d'une meilleure compréhension de la nature des liens qui régissent les trois composantes du corpus TLV aujourd'hui à notre disposition, à savoir les cadrans solaires, les miroirs et les plateaux *liu-po*.

Plutôt que de s'engager dans cette voie et non sans avoir pris soin de donner un résumé du compte-rendu présenté jadis par Needham (*Volume III*, pp. 302-309), l'auteur a préféré tourner toute son attention vers les tables *liu-jen*, sur la seule évidence que le décor de fond des miroirs standards (type C) accusait certaines similitudes avec la structure générale de ce type de tables.

Rien ne permet, de prime abord, de déceler un apport quelconque de la trame TLV au dispositif représenté sur les tables *liu-jen*. L'auteur cherche toutefois à établir que la présence des quatre traverses reliant deux à deux les quatre coins et les milieux des côtés de certaines tables peuvent être considérées comme équivalentes à ce que sont sur les miroirs les marques TLV (les T comptant pour les quatre extrémités des traverses verticale et horizontale, les V pour celles des deux traverses diagonales). Là aussi, il prend pour une relation spécifique un symbolisme courant largement attesté dans les sources avant même la constitution de l'empire: la division

de l'espace en huit secteurs orientés auxquels sont appariés les huit Vents (cf par exemple, *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*, chapitre *Yu-shih*). En assimilant les marques TLV à de simples indicateurs d'orientation, c'est toute la difficile question de leur fonction technique sur les cadrans solaires qui est évacuée. Les travaux faits dans ce domaine montrent que les marques TLV sont indissociables de l'ensemble du dispositif géométrique représenté sur ces appareils et que cet ensemble devait être utilisé à des fins astronomiques, probablement le calcul des dates solsticiales, du point vernal ou de tout autre fonction déductible à partir des mouvements solaires (Need-

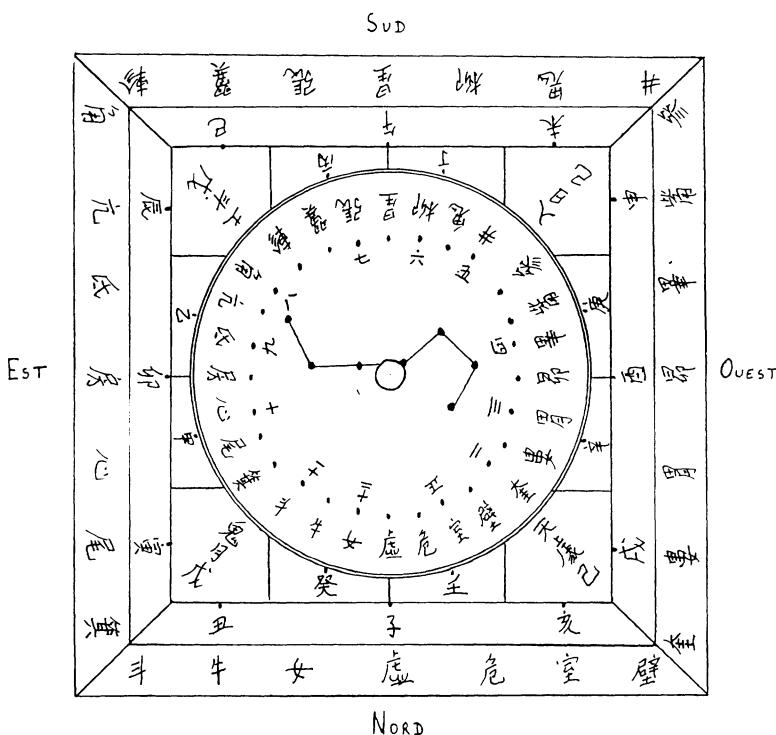


Fig. 5. Schema of the oldest known specimen of a diviner's board *shih* (165 BC; cf. *Wenwu* 1978, 8, pp. 12-31; *Kaogu* 1978, 5, pp. 338-43).

This instrument consists of a square base (Earth plate) surmounted by a smaller round disc (Heaven plate). The board was manipulated by rotating the round central disc and thus achieving various combinations of the elements represented on the Earth plate and the Heaven plate. The graph in the center of the instrument represents the Big Dipper. On the outer rim of both plates figure the twenty-eight equatorial constellations, represented twice. In the central band of the Earth plate are inscribed the twelve chronograms (or Terrestrial Branches).

ham, *Volume III*, pp. 305-308). Par ailleurs, l'importance accordée aux traverses dans la structure générale des tables *liu-jen* (l'auteur y consacre deux des cinq caractéristiques des *shih* sous les Han; p. 75, points 2 et 3) est elle aussi sujette à caution. En effet, le plus ancien modèle de table *liu-jen* connu à ce jour (-165) et découvert en 1977 dans la province du Anhui (*cf K'ao-ku*, 1978-5, pp. 338-343 et *Wen-wu*, 1978-8, pp. 12-31) ne comporte aucun dispositif particulier qui mette en valeur, soit les quatre coins, soit les milieux des quatre côtés de l'appareil (*cf fig. 5*). Malheureusement la présente étude était déjà sous presse au moment où paraissaient en Chine les premiers compte-rendus de fouilles (*cf Appendice 3*, note au sous-titre). Ce qui est d'autant plus regrettable que la découverte simultanée de plusieurs types distincts de tables de divination a permis aux spécialistes de ces questions de clarifier voire même de préciser la vision globale que nous avions de ces instruments astro-calendériques et de la fonction mantique qu'ils avaient sous les Han antérieurs.

Signalons enfin que les animaux emblématiques, éléments si importants du décor de fond des miroirs standards et post-standards, ne sont pas du tout représentatifs de la facture des tables *liu-jen* sous les Han. Une seule apparition sur les quatre exemplaires identifiables et il s'agit précisément de la table (g1 dans la classification de l'auteur) dont l'attribution Han est un fait de tradition et non une réalité archéologique. Mis à part la présence de motifs animaliers, cette table présente en effet plusieurs autres irrégularités qui en font un objet à part dans le corpus des tables *liu-jen* authentiquement Han (absence de pivot central permettant le mouvement du plateau circulaire autour de la base carrée, facture en bronze plutôt qu'en bois laqué).

En somme, les seuls éléments véritablement communs et que l'on trouve sans équivoque possible à la fois sur les miroirs TLV et les tables *liu-jen* sont les bosses et les douze *branches terrestres*. C'est peu, surtout quand on pense que la constellation du Boisseau ainsi que les vingt-huit constellations équatoriales qui constituent l'essence même des tables *liu-jen* sous les Han ne furent jamais transposées sur un seul des miroirs TLV existants.

La tentative faite par l'auteur de rattacher la fabrication des miroirs TLV sous les Han à la manipulation des tables *liu-jen* est cependant loin d'avoir été négative. On doit lui reconnaître le mérite, d'une part, d'avoir abordé la question sous tous ses aspects en prenant soin de donner au lecteur une présentation brève mais précise de ces instruments mantiques encore mal connus du public non spécialisé et, d'autre part, d'avoir fait ressortir l'influence exercée par la cosmologie Han et les pratiques qui la fondaient sur certains aspects de l'art religieux de cette dynastie.

Ch'an	禪		hsiang-ch'i	象	象	
Ch'ang-o	嫦	娥	hsien	仙	仙	
Ch'ang-sha	長	沙	hsien-jen liu-po	仙人	六博	
<u>Chao-hun</u>	招	魂	hsiu	宿		
chi li	吉	禮	hsian	巽		
ch'i	綦		<u>Hsian-chung hsiang-chuan</u>	玄中象傳		
ch'i-lin	麒	麟	hsian-shih cheng-ch'i	旋式正綦		
chia-yin	甲	寅	Hsian-tsang	玄	奘	
ch'ien	乾		hu (gourd)	瓠		
Ch'ih-sung	赤	松 (誦)	hu (vase)	壺		
ching-hun	精	魂	hu-lu	瓠		
ching-shen	精	神	hua-kai	華	蓋	
chou	丑		<u>Huai-nan tzu</u>	淮	子	
Chuang-tzu	莊	子	huang-ch'üan	黃	泉	
Chu-lung	燭	龍	Huang-ti chin-k'uei yü-heng ching			
<u>Ch'u-tz'u</u>	楚	辭	黃帝金匱玉衡經			
<u>Ch'un-ch'iu</u> <u>fan-lu</u>	春秋	繁露	hun	魂		
fang-chu	方	諸	hun-ch'i	魂	氣	
Fu Hsi	伏	羲	I-nan	沂		
Fu-sang	扶	桑	k'an	坑		
fu-yin	伏	吟	k'ang	亢		
<u>Han-shu</u>	漢	書	Kao-li	蒿		
Han Wu-ti	漢	武	ken	艮		
<u>Hou Han-shu</u>	後	漢	kua	瓜		
hou-t'ien	後	天	kuei	鬼		
Hsi-lao	西	老 (=姥)	k'un	坤		
Hsi-mu	西	母	K'un-lun	崑		
Hsi-wang-mu	西	母	kuo-pao	國	寶	
				山		
				帝		
				母		

Lao-chün	老	君	Tai (Countess of)	軼
Lao-mu	老	母	T'ai (Mountain)	泰
Li-chi	禮	記	T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi	平廣記
liu-jen	六	壬	Tao-te ching	德經
liu-po	六	博	Tao-tsang	藏
<u>Li-shih ch'un-ch'iu</u>	呂氏	春秋	T'ien-ti	帝
Ma-wang tui	馬	王	tou	
Mu wang	穆	王	Ts'ao-yeh	葉
Nü kua	女	媧	Tso-chuan	傳
nü-kung	女	工	ts'un	
P'eng-hu	蓬	壺	Tu Kuang-t'ing	光庭
P'eng-lai	蓬	萊	Tung Chung-shu	仲舒
pi-hsieh	辟	邪	Tung-wang kung	王公
p'o	魄		tzu (chronogram)	
pu-lao pu-szu	不老	不死	tz'u-t'ang	堂
shan	山		Wang Ch'ung	充
<u>Shan-hai ching</u>	山海	經	Wang Mang	莽
Shao-kou	燒	溝	Wang-tu	都
shen (chronogram)	申		wu-hsing	行
shen (deity)	神		Wu Liang	梁
sheng	勝		Wu-ti	帝
Sheng-mu	聖	母	yang-sheng pu-szu	生不死
shih (board)	式		yang-sui	燧
shih (beginning)	始		yin (chronogram)	寅
<u>Shih-chi</u>	史	記	yu (chronogram)	酉
Shou-chou	壽	州	Yu-shih	有
Ssu-ma Ch'ien	司馬	遷	Yüan-shih hsing	怨
szu-shen	四	神	Yüan-yu	遠
Ta hsing do	大	行	Yüe-ling	月令

WOMEN.... AND OTHER.... BEASTS  
OR  
“WHY CAN’T A WOMAN BE MORE LIKE A MAN”  
(professor Higgins in *My Fair Lady*)

(*Review article*)

R. J. Z. WERBLOWSKY

The study of religions has been blighted, perhaps more than any other branch of the historical and social sciences, by the appearance and mushrooming of fads of which one can only hope that they will disappear much as they have come. Black Religion, Women in Religion and the like seem to be flourishing particularly in Divinity Schools and Faculties of Theology—a phenomenon for which there is a very simple and obvious explanation; but since this review-article is not an essay on the sociology of academic fads the subject shall not be further pursued here. But to mitigate the impression of reactionary male chauvinism conveyed by the preceding lines it may be useful, however, to re-state certain commonplaces that were obvious to everybody long before Women’s Liberation, Women’s Studies and Women-in-Religion were ever heard of. The writer craves the reader’s indulgence for repeating here some old, obvious, hackneyed and trite commonplaces.

In the first place it has always been taken for granted by most students (*pace* Bachofen and his small band of latter-day devotees) that practically all historical cultures, including the so-called primitive ones, are male cultures i.e., cultures characterised by male dominance. The reasons for this lop-sided state of affairs are not our present concern. The corollary of this basic fact is that social and cultural, including religious, institutions reflect male dominance, male attitudes, male interests and (the psychoanalyst would add) male fears, repressions, complexes, overcompensations etc. Consequently symbols of the feminine (whether the *ewig weibliche*, the virgin, the whore, the destructive and cannibalistic demoness, the good fairy, the mother—including Mother Earth,

Mother Goddess, Magna Mater or what-have-you—are *male* symbols and should not be mistaken for self-expressions of women. Even if by a stroke of good fortune an archaeologist in Rome should dig up the secret diary of one of the Vestal Virgins, it would be the diary of a woman whose personality and role had been formed (or de-formed) by a male-dominated culture. Thirdly, and lastly, it is obviously going to take a lot more time until our culture will have changed sufficiently to enable women to be really themselves and to create a genuinely and authentically feminine view and symbolisation of reality.

The late Fokke Sierksma, professor of the phenomenology of religion in the University of Leiden, was very much pre-occupied by the problems which this situation generates. In 1962 he published (in Dutch) *The Rape of the Women's Mysteries*. Unfortunately Sierksma was also a great writer, and his excessive sensitivity to style and language as vehicles of expression prevented him from using, with a few exceptions, other languages than the one of which he was past master. (I drew attention to this regrettable impoverishment of international scholarship due to Sierksma's linguistic fastidiousness in my review of his Dutch book on messianic movements; see *History of Religions* V, 1966, p. 304). In the aforementioned work Sierksma examined the various and widespread myths of the aboriginal power of women which they held thanks to their possession of certain mysteries, but which they subsequently lost to the men. His analysis of these myths enabled Sierksma to look with new eyes at the phenomenon of male "secret societies" as well as female secret societies (the latter being, according to him, a "secondary" response to male dominance). Without being a dogmatic Freudian, Sierksma also had an intuitive insight into the relations between sexuality and aggression. Among many other things, sexuality is also something which males never learned to master. It is not only a source of desires, lusts and satisfactions, but also of frustrations and fears which, when projected on the appropriate source and/or object, call forth, intensify, or displace aggression. Sierksma dealt with this aspect of the matter in his work on religious iconography (*The Gods As We Shape Them*, 1960) and especially in his *Tibet's Terrifying Deities* (unfortunately out of print both in the original and in the reprint edition). After all, nobody

can contemplate Tibetan *yab-yum* bronzes or other images without being struck by the extraordinary combination of sexuality and aggression. One might even venture the generalisation that the more a male culture is (consciously or subconsciously) obsessed by its dubiously controlled sexual desires, the more it is also obsessed a) with the notion of the irredeemably libidinous nature of woman, and/or b) with the need to guard the virginal purity of their women-folk. One does not have to be a psychoanalytic expert in the mechanisms of projection in order to guess that the naturally pure men are the obvious and appropriate guardians of female purity. The way this works out in Indian culture on the level of stories and folk-tales is delightfully illustrated in the instructive and enjoyable story-book of Amore and Shinn.<sup>1</sup> A similar message is transmitted by the chapter on "Women" in the new RIG VEDA anthology edited by W. D. O'Flaherty and which, for many readers, will undoubtedly replace earlier translations of this Indian classic.<sup>2</sup> And what a comfort it must be to certain non-western pre-modern cultures to have mythological or theological assurance, and valiantly to proclaim, that sexual freedom (= licentiousness and profligacy) is essentially a corrupt and wicked importation from the corrupt and wicked West. Altogether we owe a great debt to Sierksma's student, Mr K. D. Jenner, for having invested so much labour in producing, on the basis of Sierksma's subsequent work as well as his unpublished papers, an enlarged and revised version of this controversial but highly stimulating and important study—alas, again in Dutch—under the title "Religion, Sexuality and Aggression".<sup>3</sup>

Equally controversial, highly stimulating and important is Prof. Wendy D. O'Flaherty's recent book dealing with related problems.<sup>4</sup> The author is writing as one of the leading specialists in Indian studies, but—*erra fortiter!* the battle-cry of all neo-Lutheran comparative religionists—she happily is not afraid to tackle tricky matters of substance as well as method. She deals courageously with subjects that are, strictly speaking, outside the official field of her professional expertise (e.g., Celtic mythology and the role of horses and mares therein) and she unabashedly confronts (three cheers for Wendy!) the puritanical purists who still use the word "eclecticism" as a term of opprobrium. The whole of chapter 1 is a

methodological introduction. "If it is about castration, try Freud; if it is about heresy try theology". She advocates a "tool-box approach", expecting the researcher to carry a very wide and catholic assortment of tools in his box. Needless to say that her toolbox approach has nothing in common, except verbal similarity, with Lévi-Strauss' *bricolage*.

It is a great book, and a very rich book. Indeed so rich that no review can possibly do justice to it. Experts in Indian mythology will probably have most of the fun, though they may demur here and there. Experts in Celtic or Greek mythology may raise their eyebrows at the cavalier treatment of some themes (e.g., horses, mares and other equine beings). Students of comparative religion may wonder how much we can legitimately deduce from mythology alone. Thus it is one thing to talk about myths or even iconography of Ardhanarishvara, and quite another to enquire if he ever formed the object of a (sectarian?) cult. Surely the subject deserves fuller treatment than accorded to it in ch. 10 of Pranabananda Jash's *History of Saivism* (Calcutta, 1974). But even where O'Flaherty's supportive evidence is inadequate, the reader remains grateful: instead of brushing aside her arguments he will prefer to hopefully wait (to use an Americanism) for further evidence to strengthen e.g., the slender psychoanalytic base of Carstair's or Kakar's suggestions concerning Indian culture-and-psychology. Altogether the book is full of brilliant and provocative insights, brilliantly and provocatively expressed. The present reviewer is afraid of quoting samples because his enthusiasm might run away with him and he might end up quoting the whole of this most quotable book.

The two readers who must have enjoyed the book most, probably were, if one may venture a guess, Professors Dumézil and Lévi-Strauss. The former because the net, thrown from an archimedical point in India, also tries to catch Greek, Welsh and Irish mythological material. The latter because O'Flaherty proves herself a dazzling (and very often convincing) *jongleur*, masterfully playing with the whole gamut of possible symbolic combinations and permutations. Students of Indian material have always been fascinated by the extremes to which Hindu mythology would go: super-ascetics keeping their seed and their *bindu* to the point that the *tapas* generated by them makes the celestial gods uncomfortable,

and on other occasions spilling their carefully hoarded semen all over the place at the mere sight of a lovely maiden or apsaras. As O'Flaherty put it in one of her earlier works: Hindu mythology is not like Aristotelian ethics; instead of going in for the golden mean it prefers the two golden extremes. There is no end (except, of course, the limits set by algebra) to the possible combinations and permutations: the nourishing and the killing female/mother; woman as lover/consort and as mother (i.e., the "erotic" *versus* the non-erotic female). The female that withholds her fluid (especially milk, although there are cases of poisonous and deadly milk too) is evil; the male that withholds (his semen) increases life-force. And so the merry-go-round has started: male/female, husband/goddess-consort, son/mother, eros/incest, frustration/aggression, chastity/libido, human/divine (including the different types and levels of "hierogamies"), equilibrium/disequilibrium, good fluid/bad fluid (milk, blood—menstrual and otherwise—, tears, sweat and more), symbiosis/mutuality, uninhibited release *versus* control (both e.g., in dance)—they all are deftly exhibited before our eyes until the reader reels with dizziness. O'Flaherty probably intentionally ignored the Chinese material (which she could easily have quoted from van Gulik) showing how sexuality can be conceived as the male art of drawing the principle of life from the female partner without losing his own to her.

Needless to say that where completeness/incompleteness (and their concomitant mechanisms of fear-compensation-aggression) and/or the pair inequality/balance come into play, there also the myth of the androgynous is bound to turn up. O'Flaherty undoubtedly knew that Eliade's treatment of the subject brought down on him some of the harshest (and rudest) criticism, but she does not hesitate to acknowledge her debt to the great master even where her very sophisticated treatment goes beyond him. But the myth of the androgynous is only one of Prof. O'Flaherty's many themes and hence it would be unfair to complain about the omission of certain references in the bibliography (e.g. for Greek mythology the very short but excellent book by Marie Delcourt, *Hermaphrodite*, Paris, 1958; the perspective of Social Psychology as e.g. in Anne-Marie Rochebhave-Spenlé, *Les Rôles Masculins et Féminins*, Paris, 1964; and especially the great survey which also deals with Indian

material by H. Baumann, *Das Doppelte Geschlecht: Ethnologische Studien zur Bisexualität in Ritus und Mythos*, 1955). There is male androgynety *versus* female androgynety. The author could have bolstered her case by extending the lessons to be learned from the androgynous (I apologise for the tautology) Shiva Ardhanarishvara to the ubiquitous Shiva Nataraja who is practically always (I am using a qualifying phrase since I do not feel competent to say “always” *tout court*) “androgynised” by providing him with one male (elongated) and one female (short, but adorned with a feminine jewel viz. ornament) ear. Bi-sexuality? Yes, but—as Freud would have noted with a satisfied smile—through “displacement upwards”. (My colleague Dr D. Shulman tells me that this iconographic subtlety is canonical: it is not accidental but in accordance with the specific prescriptions in the shastras).

Compared to the vibrant ebullience of Sierksma and O’Flaherty, Diana Paul<sup>5</sup> is almost humdrumly solid. Almost but not quite, for although Prof. Paul ostensibly wants to provide an anthology of annotated texts (most of them translated by her directly from the Sanskrit and Chinese originals), her general introduction as well as the introductions to the several chapters, combined with the texts themselves, add up to a major thesis.

The “mysogyny” of early Buddhism has often been commented upon and discussed. If the Buddha responded to Ananda’s request and permitted the establishing of an order of nuns, predicting at the same time that as a result of this decision the sangha would suffer and its life-span be diminished, we must assume that he did so not in a moment of weakness but in full knowledge of what he was doing viz. about to do. It is hardly necessary to add that this story (apocryphal? authentic? reflecting the attitudes of whom and of what period?) is a gift horse—or rather a gift mare—to all students of “women-in-religion”. Over fifty years ago, in 1930, the late Miss I. B. Horner (see obituary notice in *NUMEN* XXVIII (1981), pp. 274-5) published her *Women under Primitive Buddhism*. There is historical significance and possibly also karma in the fact that Miss Horner still lived to write the Foreword to Diana Paul’s study. Prof. Paul is concerned with the question how Buddhist egalitarianism came to terms with its even stronger heritage of mysogyny, and she examines the problem from the point of view of Mahayana texts

(wisely leaving aside Tantrism). Choosing her sutras with much circumspection, she identifies various types: the Temptress and the Mother ("traditional views of women"); Paths for Women Leading to Salvation (the nun and the good daughter, among others); Bodhisattvas with and without sexual transformations and—the most intriguing and questionable of all—"Images of the Feminine" including, of course, Kuan-Yin as well as the "female Buddha" (fortunately with a question-mark!), referring to "Queen Shrimala Who Had the Lion's Roar". Among the sutras adduced and translated are the relevant chapters from the Vimalakirti-nirdesha, the greater Prajnaparamita in Eight Thousand Verses, the Lotus Sutra and many lesser-known texts. Diana Paul's sense of humour enables her to bring out the wry humour implicit in many Mahayana sutras e.g., chapter 7 of the Vimalakirti-nirdesha, where Sariputra, after enquiring of the celestial maiden why she had not transformed herself into a male, suddenly finds himself temporarily transformed into a female and the maiden into a male. The moral of the Mahayana story is clear: in true enlightenment the duality male/female is transcended and has become meaningless.

The chapter on Kuan-Yin invites further study, and one hopes that Prof. Paul will elaborate more fully on the subject in her future work. The feminine character of Kuan-Yin is a dubious affair, to put it mildly. Prof. Paul, sticking to the texts, does not deal with the iconographic evidence. Nobody in Japan would consider Kannon-sama as essentially feminine, although mention should be made of a curious incident in the visionary biography of Shinran Shonin. Once Kannon appeared to him in a dream to assure him that if bad karma should ever cause him—*horribile dictu*—to rape a woman, he (Kannon) would be that woman! In India he is male. The transformation of Avalokiteshvara is, as Prof. Paul correctly observes, a Chinese phenomenon. But the iconography (Kuan-Yin's *visible* i.e., uncovered, broad feet as well as his/her half-bare (male) breast) runs counter to Chinese notions of femininity, let alone of Confucian propriety. Mme. de Mallman's standard monograph, referred to by Prof. Paul, deals with the iconography of the Indian Avalokiteshvara and not with the Chinese Kuan-Yin. There are Chinese texts in which the compassionate Kuan-Yin comes

perilously close to being a whore. In the sutra translated and quoted by Diana Paul (p. 267 ff.) there is no evidence at all that the Bodhisattva is female; her n. 17 on p. 280 says the truth not only about that particular line but about the whole text. Is the Chinese female semi-transformation due to specifically Chinese elements? Is it because what was male to Indian eyes looking at Indian iconography is “effeminate” and ultimately feminine to the Chinese beholder? This “explanation”, however, though perhaps not irrelevant, is hardly sufficient. If the iconography of Indian male faces seemed “effeminate” to the Chinese, then why was Kuan-Yin the chosen victim of sexual transformation? There are, in fact, plenty of extremely masculine Chinese Kuan-Yins. On the other hand quite a number of Chinese porcelain figures of e.g., the Bodhisattva Manjusri are as feminine as any Kuan-Yin in “her” capacity of Goddess of Mercy could ever possibly be. One would have liked to hear Judge Dee hold forth on this particular question, and one wishes that Diana Paul would place us even more in her debt by taking up this subject in a future monographic study.

Speaking of ambiguities and mythological beasts, brief mention should also be made of the monkey-hero of Wu Ch'engen's well-known novel. Arthur Waley's inadequate and very abbreviated translation of one of the many versions is now superseded by Prof. Anthony C. Yu's masterful and sensitive version of which vol. 3<sup>6</sup> has recently come off the press. Prof. Yu is less interested in legendary monkeys than in the novel which he correctly sees as reflecting the Taoist-Confucian-Buddhist syncretism of Ming (but not only Ming) China—the same religious reality that found its theoretical expression in the discussions and controversies regarding *san chiao*. Prof. Diana Paul could have spiced her book with a reference to the hilarious episode in the novel (ch. 53) where our unruly monkey's master, the saintly monk “Tripitaka” (the proper Chinese name of this 7th cent. worthy was Hsüan-tsang) and his companions suddenly find themselves pregnant!

The ambiguities revealed, or rather pre-supposed, by the works reviewed seem to be ubiquitous. The Gospel according to Thomas, one of the best known texts from the Gnostic library found at Nag Hammadi, makes Jesus say “When you see the one who was not born of woman, prostrate yourself on your faces and worship him

for He is your Father". The gnostic, unlike the orthodox Christian, could not bear the idea of the Perfect Redeemer's birth from a mother. Non-gnostic Christianity not only opted for a birth without an earthly father but from a Virgin Mother; it even had this mother survive her divine son! Buddhism, on the other hand, could not bear the idea of a mother of flesh and blood co-existing with the Buddha. Hence Queen Maya had to die seven days after giving birth, and Prince Siddharta was brought up by his less compromising aunt, Queen Shuddhodana. Transcending dualities? The same gnostic Gospel has Jesus say: "when you make the two one and the inside like the outside.... and you make the man and the woman a single one, in order that the man is not the man and the woman is not the woman .... then you will enter [the kingdom]". This sounds very edifying, and almost like a motto for Mircea Eliade's *The Two and The One*. But the truth will out, and the gnostic Gospel, though not referring to any Bodhisattvas, has Simon Peter say "Let Mary go away from us, for women are not worthy of life", and Jesus (perhaps because he had not read the Mahayana sutras translated by Diana Paul) replies "Lo, I will draw her so that I will make her a man so that she too may become a living spirit which is like you man; for every woman who makes herself a man will enter into the kingdom of heaven". It is with relief that one turns from the gnostic Gospel to the Vimalakirti-nirdesha, chapter 7.

RJZW

<sup>1</sup> Roy C. Amore & Larry D. Shinn, *Lustful Maidens and Ascetic Kings: Buddhist and Hindu Stories of Life* (Oxford Univ. Press, New York-Oxford-Toronto), 1981. pp. 198.

<sup>2</sup> *The Rig Veda*: one hundred and eight hymns, selected, translated and annotated by Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth), 1981, pp. 343. £2.25.

<sup>3</sup> Fokke Siersma, *Religie, Sexualiteit en Agressie* (Uitg. Konstapel, Groningen), 1979, pp. viii + 341, with a Preface by Prof. Th. P. van Baaren and a postscript (pp. 293-341) by K. D. Jenner.

<sup>4</sup> Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Women, Androgynes and Other Mythical Beasts* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago), 1980, pp. xviii + 382.

<sup>5</sup> Diana Y. Paul, *Women in Buddhism*. Foreword by I. B. Horner. (Asian Humanities Press, Lancaster-Miller Publishers, Berkeley, Calif.), 1979, pp. xxii + 333.

<sup>6</sup> Anthony C. Yu (transl.), *The Journey to the West*, vol. 3 (University of Chicago Press, Chicago), 1980, pp. 453.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Jñānapīṭha Mūrtidevī Granthamālā* — Bhāratīya Jñānapīṭha Publication, Delhi-Varanasi.

L'institution connue sous le nom de Bhāratīya Jñānapīṭha s'est donné pour tâche et d'encourager la création littéraire contemporaine et de faire connaître les œuvres de l'Inde classique qui risquaient de tomber dans l'oubli. C'est ainsi que, pendant vingt ans, la collection Jaina Granthamālā, éditée sous la direction conjointe des regrettés Hiralal Jain et A. N. Upadhye (deux grands savants que liait une profonde amitié), a facilité la publication de traités érudits et de compositions littéraires jaina rédigés en sanskrit, en moyen indo-aryen et en langues dravidiennes, ou encore celle de quelques travaux de synthèse de bon aloi. Elle poursuit aujourd'hui son entreprise.

Fidèle à sa vocation, le Bhāratīya Jñānapīṭha a participé aux manifestations qui ont marqué, en 1973-1974, le 2 500ème anniversaire du nirvāṇa de Mahāvīra, en rééditant des livres épuisés et en publant divers ouvrages consacrés à des aspects variés du jinisme. Voici quelques-uns de ces titres.

Equipe de Recherche Associée au CNRS 094,  
de Philologie bouddhique et jaina

COLETTE CAILLAT

JAIN, Jyoti Prasad, *Religion and Culture of the Jains* (Mūrtidevī Jaina Granthamālā: English Series 6) — [New Delhi], 1977<sup>2</sup>, XI + 196 p.  
18 roupies indiennes.

Publié une première fois en 1975, ce volume présente le jinisme en dix chapitres et trois appendices clairs, allègres, écrits par un savant qui est aussi un fidèle convaincu, d'obédience manifestement digambara.

Il expose les enseignements jaina traditionnels avec concision, intelligence, et le désir d'éclairer le profane. Après un chapitre d'introduction, et deux chapitres consacrés, l'un à l'historiographie (II, Les vingt-quatre Tīrthaṅkara), l'autre à l'histoire du jinisme<sup>1</sup> (III, Histoire du jinisme après Mahāvīra), il aborde les principaux points de la doctrine: IV, La doctrine (métaphysique et ontologie...), V, Théorie de la connaissance, VI, La voie (de la Perfection: voie du laïc, voie du religieux). Les manifestations sociales, intellectuelles et artistiques occupent les chapitres VII, Culte..., VIII, Lieux de pèlerinage, art et archéologie, IX, Littérature.

Dans l'épilogue (X), l'auteur insiste sur l'actualité du jinisme. Les appendices citent A) les textes de la récitation quotidienne, B) une trentaine de maximes fondamentales, C) un assez grand nombre d'ouvrages sur le jinisme. Au reste, le livre est illustré de onze planches.

On ne saurait certes le dire absolument impartial, et il ne se veut pas critique. Mais il vaut par sa hauteur de vues, la précision de nombreuses données (fêtes, p. 121-124, lieux de pèlerinage, 128-134...), l'excellence de certaines de ses synthèses, par exemple sur l'expansion du jinisme à l'époque classique et médiévale, sur les postulats et les méthodes de la logique jaina (doctrines dites des différents "points de vue", et du "peut-être"..., supports théoriques de l'esprit de tolérance). Ce qui est dit de l'*ahimsā* et de la mort volontaire par le jeûne tente de répondre aux fréquentes perplexités du lecteur occidental, qui devrait percevoir, discrètement, mais indubitablement exprimées au fil des pages (chapitres IV-VII, entre autres), les aspirations mystiques de beaucoup de penseurs jaina.

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<sup>1</sup> De nombreuses études se sont donné pour tâche de fixer les dates des *nirvāṇa* du Buddha et de Mahāvīra (qui sont plus ou moins indissociables). Pour ce dernier, la tradition jaina retient -527, point de départ de l'ère dite *Vīra-saṃvat*. La plupart des auteurs jaina la regardent comme scientifiquement fondée. D'autres savants ont, néanmoins, opté pour des époques moins hautes (-467, puis -477, selon Jacobi, etc.). La question fait, aujourd'hui, l'objet d'un nouvel examen (cf. H. Bechert, *Indologica Taurinensis*, vol. 10, 11, sous presse).

JAIN, Hiralal and A. N. UPADHYE, *Mahāvīra. His times and his philosophy of life* (Murtidevi Jain Granthamala: English Series) — [New Delhi], 1977, 60 p. 3 roupies indiennes.

Cet opuscule réunit deux contributions connues, mais d'accès relativement malaisé. La première reproduit (p. 9-45), dans une version anglaise due à A. N. Upadhye, la préface (originellement en hindî) dont H. L. Jain a fait précéder son édition du *Virajininda-cariu* ("Vie héroïque du Seigneur Jina Mahāvīra", éd. Bhāratīya Jñānpīṭha); la seconde (p. 46-60) reprend, à peu près, les termes d'une conférence donnée préalablement par A. N. Upadhye sous les auspices de l'Indian Institute of Culture, Bangalore. Comme il est écrit dans l'avant-propos et l'introduction, les éditeurs ont souhaité que fût présenté au public cultivé un portrait de Mahāvīra et un panorama de son oeuvre qui fussent exempts de parti pris sectaire mais susceptibles de rendre pleine justice à cet "humaniste" éminent, l'un des plus éloquents tenants de l'*ahimsā*, du détachement, ainsi que de la tolérance intellectuelle.

La première partie emprunte à quelques-unes des œuvres les plus célèbres de la littérature jaina (en sanskrit et moyen indo-aryen) les renseignements qu'elles fournissent sur les grands événements de la vie du prophète et sur les lieux et circonstances où ils se seraient produits. Philologue, H. L. Jain analyse et confronte ces textes avec objectivité, cherche à en interpréter les données avec rigueur, à situer les faits avec exactitude et précision dans l'espace et le temps (que les traditions courantes s'en trouvent, comme il le montre, infirmées ou confirmées). Il souligne éventuellement que la valeur des sites tient à celle des victoires spirituelles qu'ils symbolisent ou commémorent.

Aussi bien, A. N. Upadhye dit sans ambages que les détails de la biographie de Mahāvīra ont moins d'importance, à ses yeux, que l'enseignement du Maître, qu'il appelle à comprendre authentiquement, à pratiquer avec sincérité. Il s'attache, dès lors, à en examiner les principes essentiels, à en dégager l'esprit, à montrer que ces préceptes antiques répondent aux préoccupations et nécessités du monde contemporain. L'accent est mis, entre autres, sur l'esprit de tolérance et sur l'*ahimsā*; on retiendra la traduction ici proposée de ce terme: "In simple language, it means the greatest possible kindness towards the animate world" (p. 55).

(ERA 094)

COLETTE CAILLAT

*Pañcāstikāyasāra. The Building of the Cosmos* (Prakrit Text, Sanskrit Chāyā, English Commentary etc. along with Philosophical and Historical Introductions) by The Late Prof. A. CHAKRAVARTI-nayanar. And The Prakrit Text, Sanskrit Chāyā of the same along with the Sanskrit Commentary of Amṛtacandra and Various Readings. Edited in the Present Form by Dr. A. N. UPADHYE (Jñānapīṭha Mūrtidevī Granthamālā: English Series 4) — [New Delhi], 1975, 12 + LXVIII + 210 p. 30 roupies indiennes.

*Samayasāra* of Śrī Kundakunda. With English Translation and Commentary Based upon Amṛtacandra's Ātmakhyāti. Together with English Introduction by Prof. A. CHAKRAVARTI (Jñānapīṭha Mūrtidevī Granthamālā: English Series 1) — [Delhi], 1971 p. 1-12 + 1-113 + 1-240. 15 roupies indiennes.

Ces deux rééditions, à quatre ans d'intervalle, sont mutuellement complémentaires, puisqu'elles présentent, avec des introductions substantielles, le texte prakrit et la traduction anglaise commentée de deux traités majeurs de Kundakunda, maître dont l'activité se situe vers les débuts de notre ère, et dont l'autorité et l'influence ont de tout temps été considérables chez les digambara de l'Inde méridionale.

Rédigés dans le prakrit qu'on a généralement appelé “śaurasenī jaina”, le *Pancatthiya-samqaha* ou *-sutta*, “Compendium sur les cinq masses d'être” et le *Samaya-sāra*, “Essence de la Doctrine” (concernant le Soi), appartiennent, avec le *Pavayana-sāra* (sanskrit *Pravacana-sāra*, “Essence de l'Enseignement”)!, à une trilogie essentielle aux yeux des fidèles (“*Sāratraya*”), où K(undakunda) expose les principes de la métaphysique jaina et de l'éthique qui en dérive. Ils en alimentent aussi la mystique, tant ce philosophe appelle à reconnaître et contempler l'âme, principe de “vie” (*jīva*), dont la nature est purement spirituelle (malgré les mélanges et confusions qu'engendrent les mécanismes psychophysiologiques et les aberrations des ignorants); il multiplie aussi les objurgations, incitant les fidèles à dépasser les valeurs du monde empirique, à transcender l'opposition entre acte méritoire et mauvais, à éprouver enfin l'unité, l'unicité absolues du *jīva*.

Si importante que soit l'oeuvre de K aux yeux de ses coreligionnaires, elle est relativement mal connue hors de l'Inde. Il était donc utile d'en faciliter l'accès en republiant les traductions et les lumineux commentaires qu'A. Chakravarti a donnés, strophe après strophe (suivant l'exégèse d'Amṛtacandra, de la fin du 10ème siècle(?)), en 1920, du *Pancāstikāya*, en 1950, du *Samayasāra*. Le premier de ces traités répartit ses 173 stances sur deux livres: l'un examine les cinq *astikāya*, “masses d'être” (*jīva*, matière, espace, support du mouvement, support du repos), auxquels s'ajoute une sixième substance ou *dravya*, le temps (gāthā 1-104); le second livre (gā. 105-173) situe le *jīva* dans une autre table de catégories, celle-ci constituée de neuf principes, dont les deux premiers, *jīva* et “non-vie”, matière (*a-jīva*), sont à l'origine des combinaisons qui expliquent les sept principes suivants, mérite et démerite, influx dans l'âme, puis endiguement et expulsion de la matière karmique, servitude et libération du *jīva*. Ces neuf principes font l'objet des neuf premiers chapitres du *Samayasāra*, autant de “scènes” et, d'“actes”, selon Amṛtacandra, d'un drame cosmique (en 415, ou 439 gāthā, selon les recensions) qui aurait le *jīva* pour héros; le thème en est l'émancipation du *jīva* empirique, qui, libéré du *samsāra*, est célébré dans sa gloire au chapitre dixième et final: c'est le Soi véritable (*ātman*), absolu, transcendant (*paramātman*).

Les préoccupations de K rejoignent, comme on voit, celles qu'expriment divers autres systèmes de pensée indiens. Aussi est-ce à l'analyse de la philosophie jaina et à sa place dans l'histoire des idées philosophiques qu'A. Chakravarti consacre principalement l'introduction de ses deux livres. L'introduction du P., après un bref aperçu historique (qui nécessite quelques mises au point, infra), rappelle les positions métaphysiques du jinisme, les traits caractéristiques de sa logique, ses critères et méthodes

épistémologiques; celle du S. examine successivement le Soi dans la philosophie européenne, puis dans l'histoire de la pensée indienne (en particulier dans les *Upaniṣad*, puis dans le *Saṃkhya* et le *Vedānta*, enfin dans le jinisme); il souligne à diverses reprises et pour terminer combien tels développements de Śāṅkara rappellent certaines propositions de K et de son commentateur Amṛtacandra (qui opposent avec insistance les points de vue absolu et empirique), quelles que soient, d'ailleurs, les divergences entre les convictions totalement monistes et idéalistes du premier, et les thèses résolument réalistes et dualistes des jaina.

Préoccupé surtout par l'élucidation générale du texte (suivant, précisément, les exégèses d'Amṛtacandra), intéressé par les possibilités de rapprochements avec la pensée philosophique ou scientifique occidentale, A. Chakravarti ne s'était pas outre mesure penché sur les questions de langue et les détails de l'édition (encore qu'un index des incipit des gāthā termine ces deux livres). Ces rééditions sont heureusement mises à profit pour remédier aux lacunes, négligences ou incohérences de la présentation originale. Les pages 139-205 du P. donnent une édition critiquement revue par A. N. Upadhye du texte prakrit, immédiatement suivi de sa chāyā sanskritie et du commentaire d'Amṛtacandra. Au même A. N. Upadhye on doit (outre une notice sur A. Chakravarti) quelques précisions sur les manuscrits et les éditions du P. (p. 7-10); dans la préface du S., il revient, à la lumière des recherches récentes, sur les dates de K, les traditions et les études qui concernent ce maître vénéré.

On notera qu'A. N. Upadhye avait, de longue date, travaillé à établir l'édition critique des œuvres de K: il en a fourni le texte au Paramāgama Mandira, Songad (Saurashtra) où, grâce à Śrī Kanaji Swami Maharaj, l'un des maîtres contemporains les plus profondément fidèles à K, l'enseignement du philosophe est désormais gravé sur plaques de marbre aussi fidèlement qu'il est possible de nos jours.

(ERA 094)

COLETTE CAILLAT

<sup>1</sup> A. N. Upadhye en a donné plusieurs éditions – dont la troisième fait autorité: Śrī Kundakundācāryā's *Pravacanasāra* (*Pavayanasāra*) A Pro-Canonical Text of the Jainas... Agas, 1964, 32 + 130 + 433 p. (Rāyachandra Jaina Śāstramālā).

JAIN, G. R., *Cosmology: Old and New*. Being a Modern Commentary on the Fifth Chapter of Tattvārthādhigama Sūtra (Jñānapīṭha Mūrtidevī Granthamālā: English Series 5) — [Delhi], Bharatiya Jnanpitṛ Publication 1975<sup>2</sup>, 16 + X + 203 p. 18 roupies indiennes.

Physicien de métier, en même temps qu'adepte convaincu de la doctrine jaina, M. G. R. Jain met ici sa science au service de la religion pour

expliquer les enseignements dispensés dans le cinquième chapitre du *Tattvārthādhigama-sūtra* (= TS), “traité pour atteindre le sens des principes”. Due au maître *Umāsvāti*, rédigée en sanskrit dans les premiers siècles de l’ère chrétienne, souvent et abondamment commentée depuis lors, cette somme philosophique a toujours fait autorité auprès de toutes les sectes jaina: c’est dire son importance.

Le chapitre 5, qui traite surtout des substances “sans vie” (*a-jīva*), examine d’abord quatre des *asti-kāya* ou “masses d’être” qu’acceptent toutes les écoles, śvetāmbara ou digambara: substrat du mouvement, de son absence, espace, matière (*dharma* (sic), *a-dharma*, *ākāśa*, *pudgala*); à ces principes inanimés, certains (les digambara entre autres) ajoutent le temps (*kāla*) (cf. *sūtra*) 39). Avec le principe de “vie” (l’âme), de nature spirituelle (*sū* 3), le jinisme reconnaît ainsi tantôt six, tantôt cinq catégories ontologiques.

Au chapitre 5, le TS les définit et en résume les fonctions en quarante deux *sūtra* ou aphorismes, (quarante cinq chez les śvetāmbara), généralement très concis. Pour en dégager le sens, G.R.J. procède généralement en deux temps: il l’examine d’abord à l’intérieur des traditions jaina elles-mêmes (*infra*); ensuite, et surtout, il indique quels lui paraissent être aujourd’hui, dans les sciences exactes, les homologues des principes jaina et les théories qui correspondent aux déductions anciennes; puis il transpose celles-ci en termes empruntés à celles-là. Comme prémisses à ses démonstrations, il rappelle que les vérités scientifiques sont constamment remises en question—la conclusion étant, naturellement, que les réponses apportées autrefois par le jinisme sont remarquablement perspicaces, et pourraient se révéler plus vraies que celles des sciences exactes (cf. Préface, prologue, *passim*). On voit, dans ce livre, le *syād-vāda* (“doctrine” caractéristique de la logique jaina, selon laquelle un objet ou concept “peut être” tel ou tel selon le point de vue d’où on le considère) assimilé à la théorie de la relativité (de là l’importance du *sū* 32, que souligne G.R.J.), les enseignements jaina sur les mouvements de l’âme, l’influx karmique... expliqués par la neurophysiologie (p. 75 etc.), diverses modifications du *jīva* par les effets de l’ADN (181-2), le *dharma*, “support” du mouvement, devenir l’“éther” (200 ss.), et son contraire, l’*a-dharma*, le “champ” des physiciens (106)... Un résumé des différentes thèses occupe les dernières pages du volume; il est suivi de deux appendices, l’un sur le “doom of the universe”, l’autre sur les “satellites of the earth”.

Quel que soit l’intérêt de ce livre, la méthode retenue par l’auteur a peu de chance de paraître scientifiquement fondée. S’il est instructif de voir en quoi les intuitions jaina formulées voici quelques deux mille ans peuvent, à notre esprit, évoquer les résultats des observations et expériences moder-

nes, il n'est pas légitime d'assimiler spéculations métaphysiques et démonstrations des sciences exactes, ou de justifier les propositions anciennes par des opérations arithmétiques qui mêlent des unités empruntées aux deux systèmes, de suppléer au silence des jaina en introduisant dans leurs calculs les valeurs utilisées par Einstein (91). Pour le profane, les rapprochements et les identifications proposés restent des associations, somme toute, superficielles et aléatoires—au mieux, des curiosités.

On retiendra que la tradition jaina sur ces principes est ici présentée commodément: G.R.J. traduit en anglais ou paraphrase la plupart des textes sanskrits ou prakrits qu'il allègue, cite les commentateurs anciens du TS, rapproche les passages parallèles d'autres textes autoritatifs (surtout digambara, éventuellement śvetāmbara), parfois compare ou oppose doctrine jaina et autres systèmes philosophiques indiens ou autres (62 sq.; 74; 150-1).

A divers points de vue, donc, cette Cosmology: Old and New n'est pas dénuée d'intérêt documentaire. On y voit comment est tenté de raisonner le dévot contemporain, comment, même dans une communauté comme celle des jaina, qui se targue d'un certain rationalisme, la foi peut conduire des esprits cultivés à tenir et présenter les spéculations des textes canoniques ou "procanoniques" de leur religion pour plus probantes que l'expérimentation et le raisonnement scientifiques...

(ERA 094)

COLETTE CAILLAT

JAIN, S. C., *Structure and Functions of Soul in Jainism* (Jñānapītha Mürti-devī Granthamālā: English Series 7) — [Delhi], 1978, XV + 237 p. 20 roupies.

Dans cette thèse, S. C. Jain s'attache à dégager l'originalité des conceptions jaina relatives à la structure et aux fonctions,—ou plutôt au fonctionnement—de l'âme ou "principe de vie" (*jīva*). Pour ce faire, il procède à une étude comparative en confrontant, pour chaque point abordé, théories jaina, telles que les reflètent surtout les traités digambara, et autres systèmes de pensée, indiens (Nyāya, Sāṃkhya, Vedānta, etc.),—mais aussi occidentaux (Leibniz, Hegel, Kant, etc.): au lecteur d'évaluer les risques éventuels inhérents à une telle méthode; dans l'esprit de l'auteur en tout cas, elle vise sans doute, plus ou moins implicitement, à démontrer la "modernité" des enseignements jaina.

Deux chapitres préliminaires traitent respectivement du "pluralisme des aspects" (*anekānta*, ch. I) et de la "Doctrine du peut-être" (*syādvāda*, ch. II), prémisses de base des raisonnements philosophiques jaina. Mais il

est à craindre que le profane n'éprouve quelque difficulté à discerner clairement leur relation avec les sept autres chapitres du volume, consacrés à l'étude du sujet proprement dit. Le troisième passe en revue les différentes théories, idéalistes ou matérialistes, relatives à la nature de l'âme, et leur oppose le dualisme fondamental âme-matière (*jīva/ajīva*) des jaina (pp. 44-79); substance pourvue d'un certain nombre de traits, le *jīva* a pour constituant spécifique la conscience (ch. IV) sous son double aspect de principe structurel (*cetanā*) et fonctionnel (*upayoga*, "activité mentale"): l'intelligence est donc l'un de ses attributs, d'où (pp. 94-121) l'examen des divers types de connaissance qui peuvent en être la manifestation. Le "bonheur" (*sukha*), ou faculté de sentir (plaisir ou douleur), en est un autre, que, du reste, les penseurs jaina ne distinguent pas unanimement du premier: dans ces conditions, on comprend mal que, rejetées au ch. VI, les réflexions sur ce thème soient pour ainsi dire interrompues par celles du ch. V, qui porte sur la notion de dimension, d'étendue spatiale (*pradeśa*) occupée par l'âme, — les âmes: en effet, en accord avec le Sāṃkhya, mais en opposition au monisme vedāntique, le jinisme admet leur multitude infinie (ch. VII).

Au fonctionnement idéal du *jīva*, à l'épanouissement de ses facultés, s'opposent les forces contraires de toutes les sortes de karman qui l'entraînent (ch. VIII Jaina eschatology; p. 140 sq. "the distortion of the faculty of feeling by karmas"), et dont il doit s'affranchir (ch. IX The Jaina Theory of Liberation and the Non-absolute). Un exposé des vues de Kundakunda sur la nature purement spirituelle de l'âme et la réalité ultime (*paramārtha*) termine le livre.

(ERA 094)

NALINI BALBIR

CHAKRAVARTI, A., *Jaina Literature in Tamil*, with an Introduction, Footnotes, Appendix and Index by Dr. K. V. Ramesh (Jñānapīṭha Mürtidevī Granthamālā: English Series 3) — Delhi, 1974, XXII + 232 p. 20 roupies.

Publié à l'occasion du 2500ème anniversaire du nirvāṇa de Mahāvīra, ce livre est la réédition, augmentée par les soins de l'épigraphiste K.V. Ramesh (Mysore), de l'étude que le regretté Prof. A. Chakravarti avait fait paraître dès 1941 (reprise ici, p. 1-137).

Addition bienvenue, l'introduction esquisse (p. VI-XIX) l'évolution du jinisme en Pays tamoul, depuis ses débuts (vers les IVe-IIIème siècles avant notre ère<sup>1</sup>), jusqu'à son épanouissement (à partir des premiers siècles de l'ère chrétienne), puis son déclin (Xème siècle). Victime des persécu-

tions du revivalisme śivaïte, il conserve néanmoins son autorité morale, comme ce fut le cas au Karṇāṭaka.

L'Appendice (p. 138-205) rassemble utilement les textes, annotés, de 85 inscriptions représentatives (IIème-Ier siècles avant J.-C-XIVème s. ap. J.-C.; districts de Tirulneveli et Madurai notamment), déjà publiées mais dispersées; elles témoignent du prestige de la communauté monastique, au bénéfice de laquelle sont enregistrées donations de terre, de villages, d'argent, rénovations de sanctuaires, etc.

Ainsi se trouve dessiné le cadre au sein duquel, dès une époque très ancienne, s'est développée la littérature jaina de langue tamoule (p. 1-137). Mais les contours en sont parfois difficiles à cerner. Comme on l'a noté (P. Meile, *Inde Classique* II, Paris-Hanoï, 1953, §2412), “l'empreinte jaina se résume souvent à des traits superficiels ou vagues” (voir par exemple le “Roman de l'Anneau”, *Silappadikāram*, p. 50-63); l'appartenance jaina des auteurs, — critère de sélection retenu par A. Ch.—, est souvent douteuse ou incertaine (cf. les discussions p. 20-24; n. 3 p. 47; n. 2 p. 48; etc.), sans compter que telle oeuvre fondamentale du patrimoine culturel tamoul peut être revendiquée par des courants religieux variés (*KuRal*, p. 29-32; *Nāladiyār*, p. 40-44). Néanmoins, l'analyse interne permet parfois de lever les doutes en révélant la prévalence de notions plus spécifiquement jaina (classification des *jīva* du *Tolkāppiyam*, p. 22; *ahiṁsā*, p. 31; 34-35, etc.): éventuellement, elles sont à déchiffrer à travers de discrètes allusions<sup>2</sup>, tandis que tel autre texte se veut ouvertement polémique, défendant vigoureusement la foi jaina et critiquant avec virulence plusieurs écoles hétérodoxes (*Nilakesī*, p. 94-110).

Plusieurs des compositions analysées sont des documents précieux dans la mesure où elles fournissent des contre-parties sud-indiennes à des cycles légendaires connus dans d'autres langues et régions de l'Inde, et ouvrent la voie à de possibles études comparatives: *Yaśodhara-kāvya* (p. 84-90), *Jivaka-Cintāmanī* (p. 63-83, et supra n. 2), et, surtout, *Perunkathai* (p. 110-118), version tamoule de la Bṛhatkathā<sup>3</sup>, *Cūlamaṇi* (p. 90 ss.) et *Śrīpurāṇa* (non publié, semble-t-il), contributions tamoules à l'historiographie jaina des “soixante-trois grands hommes” (126-127).

Pour chacune d'elles, A. Ch. discute les problèmes de dates, d'auteur, et donne, du contenu, de larges résumés, qui gagneraient, certes, à être plus vifs, mais ont, du moins, le mérite d'être accessibles pour le lecteur intéressé.

Loin de se limiter aux “belles-lettres”, — poèmes, romans, ouvrages éthiques —, les auteurs jaina ont aussi eu leur part dans l'enrichissement de la littérature grammaticale, lexicographique, métrique, scientifique ou dévotionnelle, -Neminātha, le vingt-deuxième Prophète jaina, étant très

populaire parmi les digambara du Pays tamoul: celle-ci est brièvement passée en revue (p. 127-136).

Comme on voit, la réédition de cette monographie sérieuse, qui se termine par un index général (p. 206-232), et s'accompagne de notes bibliographiques à jour, était amplement justifiée; les éditeurs de la collection le soulignent à juste titre (p. III): elle a constitué, en son temps, une "oeuvre de pionnier", et restera utile. Elle montre heureusement que, même si la marque jaina est peut-être plus sensible dans la littérature de langue kannada, le rôle du jinisme comme élément moteur dans la vie culturelle tamoule est indéniable: on lui doit les œuvres les plus célèbres.

(ERA 094)

NALINI BALBIR

<sup>1</sup> Sur les origines légendaires du jinisme, naturellement plus anciennes, voir, récemment, dans *Mahāvīra and His Teachings*, ed. A. N. Upadhye, Bombay, 1977, V. G. Nair, "Antiquity of Jainism in Tamilnāḍ", p. 351-370; K. A. Nilakanta et V. Rāmasubramaniam "Aundy", "The Ascendancy and Eclipse of Bhagavan Mahāvīra's Cult in the Tamil Land", *ibid.*, p. 297-346.

<sup>2</sup> Sur la manière dont, par exemple, les Enseignements théoriques sont intégrés et fondus dans une œuvre narrative, cf. Dr. Miss V. Muthuccumaru, "Jīvakacintāmaṇi, A Channel of Mahāvīra's Teachings", in *Mahāvīra and His Teachings*, p. 35-41.

<sup>3</sup> Sur les rapports avec Brhatkathāślokasamgraha, Brhatkathāmañjarī, Kathāsārītsāgara et Vasudevahinḍi, et l'éventuelle constitution d'un "Urtext", voir, dernièrement, Donald Nelson, "Brāhathathā Studies: The Tamil Version of the Brāhathathā", *Indo-Iranian Journal* 22, 3, 1980, 221-235.

*Jaina Art and Architecture*. — Published on the Occasion of the 2500th Nirvana Anniversary of Tirthankara Mahavira. Edited by A. GHOSH... In three volumes — New Delhi, [1974-75], p. I-XIX + 1-203, I-XVIII + 205-309, I-XVII + 393-663; 382 pl. 550 roupies indiennes.

Alors que, depuis bientôt un siècle, de multiples initiatives ont favorisé plus ou moins systématiquement l'édition des œuvres de la littérature jaina, et l'étude de ses différents genres, en différentes langues, à diverses époques, il n'existe guère, pour les arts plastiques, que des publications dispersées, survols rapides, monographies ponctuelles (d'ailleurs importantes), livres spécialisés (concernant, par exemple, l'iconographie, les miniatures..., celles-ci ayant particulièrement séduit les éditeurs). Leur intérêt n'est pas niable, et il est heureux que, pour l'année 1973-1974, de nouveaux volumes, reposant sur des recherches originales, se soient ajoutés aux précédents. Ainsi, à la demande du Gujarat State Committee for the Celebration of 2500th Anniversary of Bhagavān Mahāvīra Nirvāṇa,

MM. U. P. Shah et M. A. Dhaky ont édité *Aspects of Jaina Art and Architecture*<sup>1</sup>, dont la majorité des trente et un articles est consacrée à des études de temples. On doit à Moti Chandra et M. U. P. Shah de *New Documents of Jaina Painting*<sup>2</sup>, et à M. U. P. Shah seul un recueil de *Treasures of Jaina Bhandāras*<sup>3</sup>. D'autres publications pourraient être citées.

On regrettait, toutefois, l'absence d'un ouvrage qui offrît un vaste panorama des monuments multiples que les communautés jaina ont légués à l'Inde. Voici cette lacune heureusement comblée, grâce à l'initiative du Bharatiya Jnanpith et à la diligence de M.A. Ghosh, naguère directeur général de l'Archaeological Survey of India. En collaboration avec une compagnie de savants particulièrement qualifiés, il édite, en trois volumes intelligemment et abondamment illustrés, une synthèse de l'art et de l'architecture jaina de toutes les régions de l'Inde, du 4ème siècle avant notre ère jusqu'au début du 19ème siècle. Tout en notant l'existence de certaines pièces typiques et de quelques singularités propres à cet art, l'éditeur souligne qu'il ne serait pas légitime de la considérer indépendamment des autres manifestations de la plastique indienne. Il retient donc un plan (parfois un peu arbitraire, dit-il), qui facilite les rapprochements et a le mérite d'une grande clarté: les œuvres sont réparties en cinq tranches chronologiques, (1) -300 à + 300, (2) + 300 à 600, (3) 600 à 1000, (4) 1000 à 1300, (5) 1300 à 1800; elles sont examinées région par région, (1) Inde septentrionale, (2) orientale, (3) centrale, (4) occidentale, (5) Deccan, (6) Inde méridionale (cf. I, p. 9-10). Au total, l'ouvrage est divisé en trente sept chapitres et dix parties. La première regroupe cinq chapitres d'introduction (1. observations de l'éditeur (A. Ghosh), 2. arrière-plan et tradition (M. N. Deshpande), 3. expansion du jinisme (S. B. Deo), 4. genèse et génie de l'art jaina (J. P. Jain), 5. arrière-plan éthique et philosophique (A. N. Upadhye)); puis viennent la présentation des monuments et de la sculpture (Parts II-VI inclusivement), la peinture et les bois sculptés (VII, chapitres 30-32), les sources épigraphiques et numismatiques (IX, chap. 33-34), les canons et les symbolisme artistiques (IX, chap. 35, iconographie; chap. 36, architecture), enfin les pièces conservées dans les principaux musées en Inde et hors de l'Inde (X). Le troisième volume se termine par un glossaire (p. 603-612) et un index (p. 613-656, suivi, comme chaque volume, de menus corrigenda).

Destiné à un large public, cet ouvrage bien conçu, bien exécuté, est de lecture généralement aisée, de consultation facile et agréable. La matière en est clairement présentée, et la documentation inclut les découvertes les plus récentes. L'éditeur n'a pas coulé les contributions dans un moule uniforme; mais il prend soin de signaler en note les particularités de certains chapitres, d'insérer des renvois, de combler d'éventuelles lacunes en ajoutant tantôt une référence, tantôt des informations complémentaires.

Les planches, généralement excellentes, sont empruntées à diverses archives, principalement celles de l'Archaeological Survey of India, et de plusieurs musées, indiens surtout. Elles se trouvent commodément regroupées vers le milieu des développements qu'elles illustrent.

Au total, la publication répond pleinement au but visé. Elle devrait se prêter à une large diffusion, et fait le plus grand honneur à tous ceux qui ont conjugué leurs efforts pour la faire aboutir.

<sup>1</sup> [Ahmedabad, 1975], XXI + 480 p. 150 roupies indiennes.

<sup>2</sup> Dans la collection du Shri Mahavira Jaina Vidyalaya, [Bombay, 23 avril 1975], 11 + 103 p., XVII pl. en couleur, 91 fig. en noir et blanc. 125 roupies indiennes.

<sup>3</sup> [Ahmedabad, 1978], L.D. Institute of Indology Series, 69, 9 + 60 + 100 p. + XVI pl. couleur + LXXXII pl. noir et blanc. 250 roupies indiennes.

(ERA 094)

COLETTE CAILLAT

Goudriaan, Teun, *Māyā Divine and Human* — Delhi, Motilal Banarsi das, 1978, XIV + 516 p. 100 rupees.

This is an unusual book not easily defined in terms of standard scholarly genres—part descriptive and analytical survey of Indian “magic” (a kind of prolegomenon to a history of Indian magic), part chrestomathy of translated Sanskrit texts on magic (very broadly defined), part extended commentary on a short Balinese Sanskrit text (no. 450 in the collection entitled *Stuti and Stava*). The latter provided the original focus of the book, as the author states in his preface: his desire to reflect upon the 21 verses of the Sanskrit fragment on Mahāmāyā has burgeoned to the point where the original nucleus has been swamped by an almost unmanageable profusion of material, much of it rather repetitive and incompletely digested. One can understand the temptation to follow each thread wherever it may lead—did not Paul Mus's immense classic *Borobodur* grow out of a mere book review?—but in the present case both Indologists and comparativists, the two main groups to whom the author addresses himself, could surely have benefited from a less unwieldy exposition.

There can be no doubt, however, of the great interest of this material. Goudriaan, who has already made major contributions to the modern study of Tantra and Āgama, is most concerned in this work with the magical side of Tantra—where the hypertrophy of magical rituals is well known. He begins, however, with Vedic and Epic materials, particularly the magical aspect of the key term *māyā*. There follows a chapter on “Worship as *sādhanā*”, clearly meant to prepare us for the *Mahāmāyā* fragment

(text and translation together with critical discussion). At this point more general investigations take over: there is a richly documented chapter aptly entitled “Bewildering Colours”, on problems of colour symbolism in Tantra and Āgama; then a chapter on *indrajāla*, the classical term for magic as an autonomous field of knowledge; and finally a very long chapter—really a monograph in its own right—on the six acts (*saṭ karmāṇi*) of Tantric magic, i.e. *ākāṣṭana*, ‘attraction’; *vaśikarana*, ‘subjugation’; *stambhana*, ‘immobilization’; *uccāṭana*, ‘eradication’; *prāyaścitta*, ‘pacification’; and *mārana*, ‘liquidation’. Those interested in such eminently practicable exercises as calling a goddess to one’s bed, circumnavigating the universe in a single night, or paralyzing a charging elephant, will find here all they need to know set out in the prosaic fashion of any do-it-yourself kit. To anyone versed in the spooky esotericism of traditional Tantric texts, these explicit revelations seem almost embarrassing.

Yet for all this wealth of detail and textual analysis, certain of the basic issues in the study of Indian magic seem barely touched upon in this book. Are we, in fact, really sure of what the term itself must mean in Indian culture? (Perhaps “cultures” would be better—there is a disconcerting tendency to juxtapose, e.g., Hindu, Buddhist, and even Jaina sources seemingly united by a “Tantric” flavor, and yet clearly emanating from very different cultural worlds). Our author states that “the essence of magic is a grasp for power. At its base lies the idea that the object or end desired becomes one with the individual who desires it; that it becomes in a certain way as it were absorbed within him” (p. 58). This may do as a working definition, perhaps; and it links up with a major thesis of the book, i.e. that magical *sādhanā* requires the identification of the worshiper with the deity—or, as the Sanskrit aphorism has it, *nādevo devam arcayet*, “only the divine can worship the divine”. This is undoubtedly a major feature of Indian ritual generally, including “magical” rituals. But where does the urge to practical mastery and power find its context? Or, to put it differently: why do we find so-called magical elements so prominent a concomitant of other (metaphysical, mythological, even philosophical) statements in texts from the Vedas onward—including the *Upaniṣads*, *Purāṇas*, and, indeed, Tantra and Āgama? The extensive documentation of this phenomenon does not in itself explain it; nor, it would seem, does the appeal to apparently universal human impulses toward controlling the world.

Goudriaan abjures the attempt to deal with the philosophical side of *māyā*; he is concerned only with what he calls its “non-speculative side” (p. 1). But it is not after all so simple to separate these levels. Perhaps we need to explore further the widespread Indian understanding of reality as

somehow soft, transformable, and open-ended, above all in the sense that the inner worlds of feeling, vision, memory, and dream are not ontologically divided from the external world of concrete forms. From Vedic times to this day, ritual is the area in which the Indian has played with these notions: we may think of the Brahman priest at the Vedic sacrifice who is required merely to “think” through the sacrifice which the other (subordinate) priests perform physically. Underlying this division into two ritual “channels”—a mental or inner one and a wholly externalized one (cf. *Kauśitaki brāh.* VI.5.18-20)—are the implicit expectation and demand that the reality of the visionary world find concrete expression in the ordinary reality of objects and effects. This expectation can have very far-reaching expressions—many of which we might call “magical”, as if we had thereby explained them. Nor does it help much to relegate what we fail to understand to supposedly more “primitive” or “popular” sources. It is important to keep in mind that Indian magic emerges from the cultural presuppositions and concerns of India.

Much of the material is here, and we can be grateful to the author for collecting it and for presenting it in ways which are often highly intriguing and suggestive. The book is no simple compendium but a serious attempt at synthesis in an area still largely uncharted. The pages abound in original ideas, which often deserve a much more detailed treatment. For example, on p. 8 the author seems to be suggesting a strikingly novel interpretation of the *Bhagavad Gītā* as incorporating the “fallacious doctrine” taught by Krṣṇa to Arjuna on the eve of the Bhārata battle. This is a rather seductive idea—could the *Gītā* be a hoax propounded by the god who prides himself on being the master of *māyā*? One can imagine the outraged responses to such a notion on the part of the pious; perhaps our author would like to develop the argument. The translations from Sanskrit materials are on the whole felicitously accomplished; the author is to be congratulated on the delightful title for *Svapnavārāhī*, the gracious “Swine Lady of Dreams” (p. 106). A number of errata have crept into citations from South Indian sources: Māyon, the Tamil name for Krṣṇa, is probably not derived from Tam. *māy*, to hide (p. 18); the Tamil myth of Mārkaṇḍeya and Viṣṇu comes from Kāñcipuram rather than Maturai (p. 34—the reference should be to Dessigane’s summary of the *Kāñcipurāṇam*, 1964); and on p. 39 the story of Cīruttōṇṭar, the Little Devotee, is improperly summarized. It is gratifying to see that the often neglected South Indian Tantric and Āgamic materials have been carefully utilized.

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DAVID SHULMAN

BIALE, DAVID, *Gershom Scholem: Kabbalah and Counter-History* — Cambridge, Mass. & London, Harvard University Press, 1979, 279 p. £10.50.

In order to render possible a fair and adequate appreciation of this excellent study, one has to specify at first what it does not intend to be. It is not an assessment of Scholem's kabbalistic research and scholarship. It does not even intend to provide an "intellectual biography" of Scholem. Once this is clearly grasped, the reader will not be disappointed.

When the young Berlin student, coming from a totally assimilated German-Jewish background, "discovered" his Judaism, he also discovered the (in his eyes) totally false, distorted and tendentious image of Jewish history and reality which, in the interests of emancipation, modernisation and acceptance by a prejudiced if not hostile gentile host-environment, Jewish scholarship (the new *Wissenschaft des Judentums*) had been projecting. Starting from total ignorance, the young Scholem mastered Hebrew and the Hebrew sources and, in the process, also discovered a whole unknown dimension of Jewish spirituality that had been carefully concealed and denied because not in keeping with the officially encouraged image of a "respectable" rational and enlightened Judaism (progressive ethical monotheism or whatever). Scholem set himself a revolutionary task and bent his immense intellect to recovering the fullness of Jewish history, not in a romanticising way (like e.g. Buber who at one stage claimed the mystical dimension of Judaism to be the true, genuine and authentic one over against the legalistic halakhic Judiasm of the Talmudic rabbis), but with the most rigorous and uncompromising tools of scholarship. Scholem, whose "conversion" to Judaism meant conversion not to a religious system but identification and solidarisation with the total historical reality of a historical people, almost logically became a Zionist and in 1923 left Germany for Jerusalem.

His re-discovery of a suppressed dimension of Jewish historical and spiritual reality (mysticism, messianism, apocalypticism) became a bombshell. His devotion to the historical study of Jewish religion, though not to the officially normative, orthodox or otherwise respectable (in terms of enlightened rational liberalism) versions of it, soon turned him into a public danger for some and an object of admiration for others. An uncompromising Zionist ("the Jews are a historical nation and people") he was also a militant opponent of certain forms of Zionist chauvinism. As an objective historian and "unbelieving" scholar whose life's passion was research into the mystical and apocalyptic dimensions of Judaism, he was considered by ideology-hunters as well as by zealous guardians of the faith as an arch-heresiarch, or an anarchist, or even a nihilist. Scholem did not

wear his deep (though anything but orthodox) faith on his sleeve. The big bad rational historico-philological scholar once confided "I simply can't understand how anyone can doubt the reality of God", and on another occasion he said "I don't know what it was, but the ancient kabbalists knew something we don't know".

Scholem's achievement is thus not merely a matter of professional interest to historians of religion. It was a vital contribution to the self-searchings and inner struggles of 20th century Jewry in one of its stormiest and most tragic periods. Hence the powerful impact of Scholem's work which confronted post-emancipation Jewish culture with an alternative and absolutely novel "dialectical" view of the nature of Jewish history. Scholem and his researches thus became major factors in the shaping of a new and dialectical self-perception and self-understanding of Judaism.

It is this aspect of Scholem's work and influence which is the subject of Dr Biale's book. And whilst the preceding paragraphs were no "review" of Biale's study, they at least tried to indicate what the book is about. It is a thorough, penetrating and very fine, though not uncontroversial, piece of work, of the utmost interest to anyone concerned with Scholem the Jew, the Zionist and the *engagé* student of Jewish History (as distinct from Scholem the historian of Judaism — area of concentration: history of Kabbalah and Jewish mysticism).

RJZW

YATES, FRANCES A., *The Occult Philosophy in the Elisabethan Age* — London/Boston, Routledge and Kegan Paul/Henley, 1979, pp. 217.\*

The place where Jewish and Christian theologians usually met during the Middle Ages, was the arena of public religious debate; in the Renaissance it was the private study. This change is highly significant; Judaism was understood by certain humanists to be not only a rival religion, but also, in its innermost essence—i.e. the Kabbalah—an expression of an ancient theology, of which Christianity was the highest and best expression. The interest in the Kabbalah, which coincided with the flowering of Neoplatonism and Hermetism in Florence, was the most important opening of Christianity to Judaism since their separation. 16th century thought, literature and, to a lesser degree, art, were heavily influenced by the amalgam of Kabbalah and late-antiquity Hellenistic thought. The full significance of the contribution of this new vein of thought to the intellectual atmosphere of the Renaissance, began to be appreciated only in our generation, when a new evaluation of the role played by Kabbalah and Hermetism emerged from the works of D. P. Walker and Frances A.

Yates. A new world, in which magic and the occult were central factors, became more and more significant for an understanding of Pico della Mirandola, G. Bruno or T. Campanella in Italy, or J. Reuchlin, G. Agricola of Nettesheim and A. Dürer in Germany. Dame Yates' book on the *Occult Philosophy in the Elisabethan Age* is a pioneering attempt to show that this philosophy played an important role also in England.

The book is divided in three main parts: the first one is a resumé of her and other scholars' researches on the occult philosophy in Italy and Germany. Though this part serves as an introduction, the author made what seems to me to be a substantial contribution to an understanding of the way concepts found in Agricola's *De Occulta Philosophia* changed into pictures painted by A. Dürer; according to Yates, Dürer's *Melanctolia I* and *St. Jerome in his Study* are artistic representations of two of Agricola's three forms of melancholy, the first picture representing the inspired artistic melancholy and the second one, the inspired intellectual melancholy.

The aim of the second part of the book is to show "that the dominant philosophy of the Elisabethan age was precisely the occult philosophy" (p. 75). Here we find the central thesis of the book: the thought and literature of this age cannot be properly understood without taking into account the influence of the Christian Kabbalah, and especially its magic side, on authors like J. Dee, F. Bacon, E. Spenser and W. Shakespeare, and the reaction against this influence in Marlowe's works. It seems to me that this thesis was, at least partially, already adumbrated in an important study of J. Blau, from which one sentence at least should be quoted here:<sup>1</sup>

"I maintain that some Knowledge of the Cabala was one factor in the background of a great many educated Englishmen of the later sixteenth and all through the seventeenth century".

But, whereas Blau mainly deals with minor authors who, since the end of the 16th century, overtly mentioned the Kabbalah in their works, Yates analyzes the infiltrations of magic themes in works wherein the Kabbalah was not mentioned at all and which became well-known classics. The main motif in Yates' discussions is the magician as the protagonist of Elisabethan thought; she convincingly shows the importance of this figure, but in my view, the kabbalistic influence is overestimated. Even John Dee, the only author Yates was ready to describe as a "Christian Kabbalist", seems to be influenced only by the magic side of the occult philosophy, whereas the speculative part of this philosophy, including, *inter alia*, specific kabbalistic concepts like the Sefirot, is lacking in Dee's works as

discussed by Yates. The same problem occurs in Yates' analysis of Spencer as influenced by Neoplatonic Kabbalah (p. 107, 179);<sup>2</sup> the Neoplatonic and magic elements are obvious, but no specific kabbalistic term can be traced in the *Fairie Queene* or in her discussions of Shakespeare's *Tempest* and *The Merchant of Venice*. The Renaissance *magus* influenced by the figure and work of Agrippa, and the reverberations of his concept of melancholy, as well as the universal harmony of F. Giorgio are discussed in masterly fashion, but statements like "the influence of Christian Cabala, and particularly the influence of Giorgi, begin to seem fundamental for the main Jewish-Christian themes of the play [i.e. the *Merchant*] and its imagery" (p. 131) attribute to the Kabbalah a role much more central than it really played.<sup>3</sup>

The last part of the book deals with the rise of Hebraic themes, specially in the messianic movement as represented by Milton, and its connection with former "kabbalistic" trends as found in Spencer. The continuity of the occult philosophy in English culture: Dee, Spencer, Milton and the Rosicrucians is discussed, and the return of the Jews to England is presented as "the culmination of the gradual movement of a new attitude towards the Jews and their religion" (p. 184). This movement took place, as Yate emphasises (p. 183) "without the presence of Jews being acknowledged in England". This "extraordinary fact" (*idem*) may be seen in a proper perspective if we remember that in the earlier phases of the Renaissance, the scholars' avidity to study Kabbalah from first-hand sources, did not change their basic attitude to the Jews themselves: no clear Philosemitism flourished from the kabbalistic studies of Pico or Reuchlin.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, their critic, Jean Bodin, who—unlike Reuchlin—was no student of the Kabbalah at all, had a far more favourable attitude to the Jews than e.g. Pico. It seems that personal contacts with Jews, even when they were private teachers, exerted very little influence on the Christian scholars' view of non-kabbalistic Judaism. If so, the interest in Jewish, occasionally kabbalistic, themes, especially among 17th century English authors, despite the lack of Jews in England, is not so surprising as might appear at first sight; the Renaissance scholars in Italy, Germany or England were interested in Jewish "secret lore" but not in the fate of its bearers. It is more plausible to assume that the return of the Jews to England was the result of the Puritan Revolution rather than of the cumulative influence of the occult philosophy.

To conclude: Yates' contribution to a better understanding of the importance of the Renaissance background of Elisabethan culture, and especially its magic factor, is impressive, whereas the importance of its

kabbalistic components, suggested by the author, still remains to be proven by further and more detailed researches.

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MOSHE IDEL

\* The Editors record with profound sorrow the passing away, in October 1981, of Dame Frances Yates at the ripe age of eighty, after a lifetime of original and fruitful scholarship.

<sup>1</sup> J. L. Blau, "The Diffusion of the Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in English Literature", *Review of Religion* VI (1941-1942), pp. 153-154. Cf. also *idem*, p. 185: "The highest point of Cabalistic influence upon the writers of England came during the seventeenth century". Blau's paper contains some interesting quotations from discussion on the Kabbalah in 16th and 17th English literature, and should be taken into account in every further investigation of the subject. See also Blau's "Browne's Interest in Cabalism", *PMLA*, XLIX (1934).

<sup>2</sup> On p. 167, Yates mentions "underlying Cabalist themes of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*". This thesis was already presented by Denis Saurat, and Blau, in the paper mentioned above n. 1, writes (p. 157) "Saurat has gone beyond the evidence".

<sup>3</sup> Yates was influenced by Daniel Banes' commentary on *The Merchant*, though she has certain reservations on his method of interpreting various figures in the play with the help of Sefirotic symbolism (p. 129). See also D. Banes, *Shakespeare, Shylock and Kabbalah* (Maryland, 1978), where the author tries to trace the influence of the Kabbalah to F. Giorgio's *Harmony of the World*. Though it is possible that Shakespeare might have been influenced by Giorgio, the peculiar subjects Banes pointed out are not specifically kabbalistic. Not everything a Kabbalist writes, a fortiori a Christian Kabbalist, has to be considered as Kabbalah! The Christian Kabbalah differs substantially and in many different ways from its Jewish sources, see R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, "Milton and the *Conjectura Cabbalistica*", *JWCI* 18 (1955), pp. 91-92. Yates was fully aware that the lack of adequate definition of the nature of Christian Kabbalah and its history, may spoil further discussions of its influence (p. 189).

<sup>4</sup> On this point see H. Oberman's lecture "Three Sixteenth-Century Attitudes to Judaism: Reuchlin, Erasmus and Luther" read at *Jewish Thought in the Sixteenth Century—an international colloquium at Harvard University, January 1980*.

HALPERIN, DAVID J. J., *The Merkabah in Rabbinic Literature*, American Oriental Series Volume 62 — New Haven, Connecticut, American Oriental Society, 1980, x + 212 p.

The student of ancient Jewish mysticism, that is the type of Jewish mysticism that developed in what is generally referred to as the Mishnaic and Talmudic periods (roughly between 200 B.C.E. - 500 C.E.), can now benefit from an increasing number of scholarly publications which are devoted to the subject and which display awareness of its relevance to the study and understanding of the cultural and religious milieu of what is

commonly designated by the term 'late antiquity'. The type of mysticism we are referring to here is known by its Hebrew name *Ma'aseh Merkavah*, literally, the Work of the (Divine) Chariot. Its major literary manifestations are contained in some parts of Apocalypticism, in rabbinic literature and in the corpus of mystical treatises known by the name of the *Hekhalot* (= [heavenly] palaces) literature.

Halperin's book is one of the most recent publications in that area of studies. It is a close-eyed investigation of the Merkavah material, texts and ideas, in rabbinic literature. Halperin stresses the exegetical character of that material as it is randomly displayed in that literature (it is exegetically linked to the visions described in *Ezeqiel* chaps. i and x), and asks: "...what this exegesis was and precisely why it was considered dangerous" (p. 1). Yet, the major task of the book is, as Halperin phrases it: "...the examination of the rabbinic sources that describe or allude to the *Merkabah* or *Ma'aseh Merkabah* without actually expounding Ezekiel's vision" (p. 5). Since in setting out the 'Methodological Principles' employed in his study Halperin states that "Once I have established the image of the *ma'aseh merkabah* conveyed by a given source, I do not assume that it must necessarily directly reflect contemporary reality" (p. 7), the book loses much of its interest to the historian of religions. However, those interested in rabbinic literature and thought will find in the book a systematic study of the relevant material, its textual and inner exegetical problems. Thus the book makes the major rabbinic sources dealing with Merkavah notions available to the English reader in a learned and critical manner. In this sense, the book is of interest to the oriental philologist and to the talmudic scholar.

Ithamar Gruenwald

BRUNNER-TRAUT, EMMA, *Gelebte Mythen*, Beiträge zum altägyptischen Mythos — Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1981, 113 p. DM 32.50.

Neudruck von vier Aufsätzen, zwischen 1961 und 1971 in der Zeitschrift *Antaios* erschienen. Frau Professor Brunner hat diese um ein Vorwort, eine Einführung und den Beitrag "Altägyptische und mittelalterlich-christliche Vorstellungen von Himmel und Hölle, Gericht und Auferstehung" erweitert.

Eine willkommene Rundschau.

M. H.v.V.

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## OBITUARY

*Gershom G. Scholem* (1897-1982)

G. Scholem, Professor Emeritus of Kabbalah and Jewish mysticism at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, was one of the most towering intellectual figures of our generation and certainly one of the most impressive and, in fact, “charismatic” personalities in the history of the modern study of religion. Whilst his vast erudition embraced more fields than dealt with by many so-called “comparative religionists”, Scholem practiced *de facto* a severe *askesis* and with almost arrogant modesty claimed that he was knowledgeable merely in his field of specialisation: Kabbalah and Jewish mysticism. This latter subject, however, attained universal recognition, stature and significance through his indefatigable labours. Without wishing to detract from the merits of his predecessors and the early pioneers of kabbalistic studies, it may safely be said that Scholem raised the subject almost single-handedly to a unique position, mainly by the unusual combination of his scholarly and personal qualities that made every reader and student approach his work with a veritable *sensus numinis*, a sense of awe. It is surely no accident that reviewers and critics have sometimes compared Scholem’s work to overwhelming natural phenomena, like tidal waves or earthquakes. Scholem not only discovered, deciphered and published in critical editions hundreds of hitherto unknown mss.—some that had slept in well-known libraries such as Parma, Vatican, Bodleian, British Museum, Munich, the Jewish Theol. Seminary in New York, and others that had to be ferreted out in the most out-of-the-way places: in fact, he prided himself on his uncanny detective and sleuthing abilities—but he also set totally new standards of philological *akribia* and historical analysis of texts. Even is good humour, sometimes approaching jolliness, never enabled him to hide the utter contempt in which he held would-be scholars whose historico-philological competence was not up to standard. It was difficult, almost impossible, to utter the work “Kabbalah” in his presence without having convinced him first that one had complete mastery of all the relevant Hebrew and

Aramaic texts. (Greek, Latin and Arabic as well as the main modern languages were, needless to say, taken for granted). In one of his seminars he once referred to the influential mediaeval pseudo-Aristotelian (though in fact neo-Platonic) treatise *Liber de Causis*. It appeared that a student did not know about this book. Scholem glared at the hapless student with utter incredulity and finally could only utter “but in that case what on earth are you doing here?”.

But unlike most philologists and textualists, Scholem brought to his studies a unique philosophical insight and phenomenological penetration. This made him the great interpreter of religious phenomena. The most abstruse theosophic doctrines; the most disconcerting and “aberrant” expressions of spirituality, mysticism, messianism or enthusiasm; the most complicated theological speculations—they all became pellucid and convincing, or at least meaningful in their own terms, once Scholem directed to them his power of interpretation which, in spite of its deep empathy never once permitted the slightest relaxation of the strictest philological standards or the neglect of historical and social contexts. When Scholem wrote about myth or revelation in the Kabbalah one sensed the presence, even though unnamed, of the ancient Greeks, of Church Fathers and Muslim theologians, of medieval philosophers and occultists, of Schelling and the most recent thinkers, behind every sentence. Sometimes his impatience with certain styles of “comparison” was barely kept under control and the result was spirited polemic with e.g. Buber or Suzuki. And in the intimacy of his home, when he dropped the pretence of being ignorant about everything except Kabbalah, he would keep his visitors spellbound by holding forth with gusto on what he thought about Grünwedel’s Tibetology.

When Scholem began his researches over 65 years ago in what was then *terra incognita*, he found an unholy alliance between Christian and Jewish scholarship, both joining hands in brotherly disdain of the Kabbalah though each for his own reasons. Christians had a vested interest in showing that Judaism as a religion of legalistic outward observance had no genuine spirituality let alone mystical interiority. Post-emancipation Jewish scholarship was bent on portraying Judaism as a religion of enlightened reason; apocalyptic and messianic outbursts or mystical enthusiasm were regrettable

aberrations to be explained by the sad and benighted ghetto-conditions. One might speculate what Scholem found more objectionable: the contempt in which the Kabbalah was held at the beginning of his scholarly career, or the current popular faddist interest in it to which his work has—*malgré lui*—contributed not a little. Scholem not only re-wrote the history of the Jewish religion (cf. the review of Biale's monograph in this issue) but in doing so he also added to religious scholarship a hitherto unknown reality of immense significance both historically and phenomenologically. Add to this Scholem's extraordinary literary gifts and his eminence as a writer, and his role on the cultural map, far beyond his encyclopaedic scholarship, becomes understandable. And as the innumerable visitors to his home will testify, the daunting scholar and sensitive writer was also an enchanting conversationalist and spell-binding *raconteur*.

His many contributions in other spheres will no doubt be evaluated elsewhere. In a journal devoted to the History of Religions at least one more point should be made. Scholem had the satisfaction of seeing his work continued by a second, third and even fourth generation of students. Obviously no other Scholem is likely to appear, exhibiting a similarly unique combination of sheer genius, scholarly *akribia*, breadth of vision, philosophical penetration and philological attention to detail. But curiously enough, unlike other scholars about whom dozens of Ph.D. dissertations and monographs have been written even during their lifetime, Scholem's researches have been developed and added to (as he himself would have desired) but no books of the type "The Hermeneutics of G. Scholem" have been produced. The explanation seems simple. To write about Scholem one would first of all have to be a scholar not of Scholem's stature (that would be impossible anyway) but at least of a calibre that would have passed muster in Scholem's eyes. Those who have passed muster (and be it only in terms of the "internalised" standards which are Scholem's legacy to those who had the privilege to be exposed to his inexorable rigour, merciless criteria and fatherly kindness and encouragement) will prefer to contribute to the substantive researches which he initiated in the fields of gnosticism, mysticism, messianism, hasidism etc. rather than writing about his methodology or hermeneutics.

Scholem's literary output can be subdivided into three main categories: his technical philological work on texts and mss. (mainly in Hebrew); his synthetic accounts (major works like *Ursprung und Anfänge der Kabbalah*, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah*, or essays and papers such as those delivered at the annual Eranos-meetings at Ascona where Scholem became one of the central figures, and subsequently published in volumes of collected essays); and occasional pieces, including semi-popular contributions to the political and ideological struggles of his people and country. A *Festschrift* published on his seventieth birthday testified to the esteem in which he was held by the international community of scholars. On his eightieth birthday an updated bibliography of his writings (1915-1977) was published, numbering almost 600 items. Honorary doctorates and other academic distinctions (he was President of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities 1968-1974) came to him almost as a matter of course.

His autobiographical *Von Berlin nach Jerusalem* offers a glimpse into the evolution of the promising and brilliant young student to the full-blown personality and genius he was to become. In fact, even after over sixty years in Jerusalem some of his childhood Berlin mannerisms of speech and dry humour were still recognisable, especially when dismissing, or rather annihilating pretentious pseudo-scholarship with the single word *Quatsch* (pronounced in unmistakable Berlin brogue). Scholem still had an enormous and carefully planned programme of research and publication when his life was cut short by a merciful providence that spared him prolonged illness and suffering. With his death the world of scholarship has become poorer by a unique genius and personality. Students, colleagues and visitors will miss his charm and warmth as well as the pleasant and at times downright comic and funny (though never flippant) quality of his humour which made them feel at ease in his study where by rights they should have been daunted and overawed by the thousands of volumes surrounding them and which their host not only owned but had actually all read. What remains is the mighty edifice of kabbalistic studies and the uncompromising standards of scholarship, research, and grasp and understanding of religious phenomena which he has bequeathed to us all—*omnibus et ubique*.

RJZW

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The Fifth Conference of the International Association of Buddhist Studies (IABS) will take place at Oxford, 16-21 August, 1982. The local arrangements are in the hands of Prof. Richard Gombrich, Oriental Institute, Pusey Lane, Oxford, Great Britain.

The European Association of Japanese Studies is holding its third International Study Conference in The Hague (Netherlands), 20-23 September, 1982. Of the seven sections one is devoted to "Religion and Thought". Specialists in Japanese religion wishing to attend or to present papers should contact the convener of the section, Prof. H. Rotermund, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes Ve section, CDHR Département Japon, 19 Avenue d'Iena, 75016 Paris, France.

The Italian member group, the *Società italiana di storia delle religioni* is marking the centenary of the birth of Raffaele Pettazzoni, the first President of the IAHR, and founder and first editor of NUMEN, with a study-conference to be held in Rome in February 1983. The theme is "Universal Aspects of Religion in the Achemenian Age", but also more general topics, historical and methodological, relating to the study of religions will be included in the programme. Detailed information can be obtained from Prof. Ugo Bianchi, via Principe Amedeo 75, I-00185 Roma, Italia.

NUMEN (vol. XXV, 1978, p. 92) reported in its *Chronicle* section that the Italian society had changed the name of its periodical (published by the *Istituto di studi storico-religiosi* of the University of Rome) to *Studi storico-religiosi*. This decision was recently been reversed and the prestigious publication reverts to its original name *Studi i materiali di storia delle religioni*.

An "International Religious Studies Conference" is planned by the Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand, for 23-25 August 1983. For details and information contact

Ms. Jan Balayney  
Centre for Continuing Education  
Victoria University  
Private Bag, Wellington  
AUSTRALIA.

The big event in the international book trade is the Frankfurt Book Fair. The 34th *Buchmesse* (6-11 October, 1982) has decided to make "Religion" one of its central themes, and to devote two exhibitions to the subjects "Yesterday's religion in today's world" and "World Religions". Though the event is essentially one for publishers and bookdealers, it cannot be denied that publishers depend on scholars as their "suppliers" (as regards books on religion) and bookdealers depend on scholars, their students and the "interested laymen" for their market. The event therefore deserves to be brought to the attention of all those engaged, in one way or another, in the study of religion.

RJZW

## LE MORT ET SON MODÈLE

*Note sur quelques rituels mélanésiens*

HENRY PERNET

Pour de nombreux spécialistes de la première moitié de ce siècle, les masques rituels “primitifs” représentaient des esprits, pour la plupart des esprits des morts. Par suite, les masques en général furent interprétés à la lumière de ce lien, considéré comme quasi-universel, du masque avec les morts. Cette interprétation ne pouvait du reste qu’être renforcée par le flou de la notion d’“esprit” de même que par la confusion qui régnait souvent, dans la littérature ethnologique de l’époque, entre les morts et les différents types d’ancêtres. Cependant, un survol même rapide des principales régions à masques (Afrique, Mélanésie, Amérique) montre que la plupart des personnages représentés par les masques sont des êtres primordiaux, des ancêtres mythiques, des héros civilisateurs et des dieux, dont un grand nombre ne sont jamais morts. Ils ne sauraient par conséquent être inclus dans la catégorie des “esprits des morts”, à moins qu’on ne soit prêt à étendre considérablement le sens de cette expression (Pernet, 1979:28-158).

Ceci ne signifie pas que les morts soient tout à fait absents des personnages représentés par les masques rituels. Il existe bel et bien un certain nombre de cas dans lesquels les masques représentent à l’évidence certains défunt. Il peut être intéressant de se demander dans quel but car, s’il est facile de comprendre pourquoi le rappel d’événements primordiaux peut inclure l’utilisation de masques mettant en situation les personnages mythiques en cause, il n’est pas aussi aisés de saisir pourquoi certains morts, bien définis en tant qu’individus, devraient être représentés par des masques. Le présent article se propose de formuler une hypothèse de travail en se concentrant sur certains aspects de quelques rituels Mélanésiens.

Arrêtons-nous tout d’abord au *malanggan* de Nouvelle-Irlande (archipel Bismarck, nord de la Nouvelle-Guinée). Ce terme renvoie, tout à la fois, à certains masques et sculptures, au complexe de

cérémonies et de festivals qui leur sont associés, et à leur style particulier, le dernier dans la liste génétิco-chronologique dressée par Felix Speiser (1941:34-38). L'un des caractères particulièrement frappants des *malanggan* est la richesse des motifs, fréquemment répétés: êtres humains, têtes humaines, oiseaux, poissons et serpents de diverses espèces, de même que des cochons ou des têtes de cochons, sont reproduits dans les combinaisons les plus variées (Bühler, 1969:180-203; Helfrich, 1973; Guiart, 1963:53, 55, 292-301; Museum für Völkerkunde Basel, 1970:22-27).

Diverses interprétations ont été données du complexe rituel du *malanggan*. Elles varient notamment en fonction de l'époque d'observation du rituel et d'émission de la théorie, ainsi que de l'école de pensée à laquelle se rattache l'auteur. Les études récentes privilégièrent volontiers l'aspect socio-économique. C'est ainsi qu'on décrit souvent les *malanggan* comme étant des fêtes du souvenir données en l'honneur d'un ou de plusieurs morts, chacun étant représenté par un personnage sculpté. L'organisation d'un *malanggan* servirait essentiellement à assurer ou à accroître le prestige des vivants (Guiart, 1963:50-1; Girard, 1954:261). Pour comprendre comment, il faut savoir que le *malanggan*, dont il n'était pas rare que la célébration intervînt plus d'un an après un décès, impliquait des dépenses considérables, ce qui supposait donc la collaboration des membres du clan du défunt. C'est pourquoi on peut affirmer qu'une "fonction capitale des rituels de Malanggan est de confirmer et de resserrer les liens sociaux entre les individus et entre les groupes" (Girard, 1954:261). De ce point de vue, les obligations du clan organisateur peuvent être étudiées dans le cadre des systèmes d'échanges cérémoniels largement diffusés en Mélanésie et qui ont souvent été comparés au "potlatch" de la côte Nord-ouest de l'Amérique (Guiart, 1963:34; Serpenti, 1972:179; étude comparative critique dans Gregory, 1980). La fonction socio-économique du *malanggan* ne s'arrêtait pas là: il marquait aussi la levée des interdits que devaient observer les membres de la parenté du défunt. En outre, au moment de la cérémonie, on procédait également à la réattribution des lopins de terre après le brassage d'intérêts qui suivait la mort d'un adulte (Lomas, 1979:56, 60).

Il ne saurait donc être question de minimiser le rôle socio-économique joué par les *malanggan*, mais force est de relever que ces

festivals avaient également une signification beaucoup plus générale qui allait au-delà de la fête du souvenir. C'est ce que suggère, par exemple, le fait que des cérémonies d'initiation se déroulaient à cette occasion. De plus, dans la majorité des cas, les oiseaux reproduits dans les *malanggan* représentent les fondateurs du clan sous leur forme animale, et certains poissons et serpents sont également étroitement liés à certains clans. L'usage de noms propres pour désigner les types de *malanggan* suggère également un lien avec des êtres mythiques et, quand on connaît le sens des figures, on découvre que le sculpteur y a transcrit une mythologie (Leenhardt, 1947:46). Malheureusement, comme on ne sait que fort peu de choses des mythes eux-mêmes, il ne nous est pas possible de déterminer la signification exacte de toutes les figures. Cependant, leur thème général ne fait aucun doute et, comme le dit Bühler (1969:187), la représentation ou la réactualisation des événements primordiaux de la création est la fonction principale des *malanggan* et des célébrations qui leur sont liées. Il serait probablement plus juste de parler à l'imparfait. A notre époque, en effet, la perte des croyances traditionnelles a atteint un degré tel qu'elle rend impossible toute confirmation sur le terrain d'une signification religieuse qui, pour l'historien des religions, reste cependant perceptible dans les éléments du rituel qui ont survécu (Girard, 1954:262; Zelenietz et Grant, 1980:116).

Des différents types de masques qui participent aux cérémonies (Helfrich, 1973:18-39), une des formes représente les ancêtres mythiques et historiques en tant que groupe; elle est travaillée de manière beaucoup plus élaborée et munie d'attributs plus nombreux que les masques qui représentent des personnes mortes récemment. Ces derniers, qui nous intéressent ici, sont fabriqués de manière beaucoup plus simple et chacun d'eux porte le nom d'un mort bien précis (Bühler, 1969:200).

Dans son interprétation, Guiart soutient que le rite consistant à représenter l'image des morts mêlée à de nombreux thèmes décoratifs ou mythiques "ne vise nullement à influer sur le statut de ces morts dans l'au-delà, ni même à offrir aux morts une satisfaction". Selon lui, il y aurait là un besoin de prestige, "le décès déjà lointain d'un être cher servant de prétexte à un ensemble cérémoniel visant à l'exaltation du groupe" (Guiart, 1963:51). Pour sa part, Girard

relève qu'on retrouve ailleurs en Mélanésie cette “confusion entre le mort et le Dieu” et se demande si elle n'est pas facilitée par la structure sociale, c'est-à-dire par le manque de perspective historique qu'entraîne l'équivalence de la génération du petit-fils avec celle du grand-père (1954:257, 264).

Tant l'interprétation de Guiart que l'hypothèse de Girard apparaissent singulièrement partielles au regard des divers aspects du rituel et de son contexte. On pourrait par exemple objecter à Guiart que le changement de statut du mort apparaît déjà, indirectement au moins, dans le fait que le *malanggan* signale le lever du deuil et la redistribution des terres. Et si le rituel ne vise ni à influer sur le statut des morts ni à leur offrir une satisfaction, on comprend mal alors pourquoi toutes sortes de malheurs sont susceptibles de s'abattre sur les membres de la famille d'un défunt pour lequel aucun *malanggan* n'est célébré (Walden, 1940:12). Il semble plus plausible qu'en ce qui concerne les morts récents, le rituel se propose bien de changer leur statut, plus particulièrement de les aider à atteindre sans mal le pays des morts et la place qui doit y être la leur. Dans ce but, ces défunts sont “incorporés organiquement” (pour utiliser les termes de Bühler, 1969:187) à un festival qui reproduit le mythe de création et le mythe d'origine de leur clan. Un tel festival inclut inévitablement la représentation des événements qui ont provoqué l'irruption de la mort dans le monde des hommes, ainsi que le rappel de la solution qui a été trouvée à ce problème. Par conséquent, nous avons de bonnes raisons de supposer que le rituel aide à résoudre le problème posé par le défunt en rappelant comment ce même problème a été résolu au temps des origines. Il est, en outre, particulièrement intéressant de noter que le *malanggan* est un complexe rituel dans le contexte duquel se déroulent et l'initiation des jeunes membres de la communauté et le passage des morts à leur nouveau statut. Nous aurons l'occasion de revenir sur cette conjonction à propos d'autres rituels mélanesiens.

Les Asmat du sud-ouest de la Nouvelle-Guinée (Irian Jaya) connaissent également un rituel masqué, le *jipae*, qui impose de grandes obligations tant aux parents du défunt qu'aux porteurs des masques (van Renselaar et Mellema, 1956:11-13). La préparation des masques prend de quatre à cinq mois et, pendant tout ce temps, les hommes qui les confectionnent sont à la charge de ceux qui les

porteront; à leur tour, ces derniers reçoivent tous les jours de la nourriture qui leur est remise par les parents des défunts pour lesquels est célébré le *jipae*. En outre, le porteur du masque agit comme le substitut du mort et adopte les enfants que ce dernier peut avoir laissé derrière lui.

Le *jipae* est en général présenté comme un rituel d'expulsion (van Renselaar et Mellema, 1956:11; Guiart, 1963:66; Bédouin, 1967:61). Dans cette cérémonie, les morts dangereux, et notamment les victimes des chasseurs de têtes, les enfants et les grands guerriers, sont représentés par des hommes masqués. Quand le moment d'accomplir le rituel est arrivé, au crépuscule, les hommes masqués sortent des bois et commencent à danser en imitant le dansement du casoar. Cette danse se poursuit toute la nuit, des parents du danseur "en titre" portant également le masque à tour de rôle: la première et la dernière danses sont par exemple assurées par le frère aîné de ce porteur "en titre". Au lever du soleil, les danseurs masqués se rendent vers la maison des hommes, suivis par les femmes. Soudain, les hommes du village attaquent les porteurs de masques avec des bâtons, les forçant, dans un grand bruit, à pénétrer dans la maison des hommes. C'est la fin du rituel proprement dit.

Dans le *jipae*, des masques représentent donc explicitement des défunts. Mais on aurait tort de se contenter de cette constatation car ces masques ne se bornent pas à représenter les morts mais adoptent également plusieurs caractères solaires: la célébration du rituel commence à la nuit tombante, moment où, selon les Asmat, le soleil met son masque pour descendre au pays des morts, situé à l'ouest. Les danseurs imitent le balancement du casoar, oiseau que les Asmat lient au soleil. Le rituel se termine au lever du soleil, c'est-à-dire lorsque le soleil quitte le pays des morts et enlève son masque.

Ce symbolisme solaire est également présent chez d'autres peuples du sud de la Nouvelle-Guinée. Nous le retrouverons plus loin à propos d'autres rituels, aussi vaut-il la peine de s'y arrêter brièvement. Au sud-est de la région habitée par les Asmat, chez les Marind-anim, dont le territoire s'étend le long de la côte depuis l'entrée sud du détroit qui sépare la Nouvelle-Guinée de l'Île Frederik jusqu'à environ 15 miles à l'est de Merauke, on

raconte un mythe de l'origine de l'homme dont voici les grandes lignes: Les démas font une grande fête sous terre, à l'ouest du territoire des Marind. Après quoi, ils se déplacent sous terre en direction de l'est (le mythe insiste sur l'importance du caractère souterrain de la fête à l'ouest et du voyage vers l'est). A l'est, à la surface de la terre, se trouve un chien-déma qui, entendant le bruit fait sous terre, se met à creuser sur les rives d'une crique. De l'eau jaillit puis un certain nombre d'êtres bizarre, ressemblant à des poissons-chats: il s'agit en fait d'êtres humains dont les bras, les jambes, les doigts et les orteils ne font encore qu'un avec le corps et qui n'ont ni bouche ni oreilles. L'intervention d'une cigogne-déma et du déma du feu donne aux humains leur forme définitive. Ils se mettent alors en route en direction de l'ouest, voyageant jour et nuit. Le premier à partir, Woryu, sera également le premier à mourir. Il a avec lui son tambour, *mingui*, dont les morts jouent depuis lorsqu'ils dansent pour une cérémonie. Il suit toute la côte vers l'ouest, jusqu'au pays des Yab-anim sur le Digul inférieur, où tous les morts se rendent depuis. Ce pays des morts est présenté comme étant "le lieu où le soleil se couche" ou comme se situant "au-delà du couchant" (van Baal, 1966:209-211; cf. Nevermann, 1972:117-8).

La course du soleil est donc le modèle, la référence, de l'existence du premier homme et, par conséquent, des hommes en général. D'où l'extrême importance qui est donnée à l'axe est-ouest, importance qui se retrouve chez d'autres populations de la région. Chez les Elema d'Orokolo, par exemple, l'axe est-ouest est essentiel (Williams, 1940:33) et chez les Kiwai, qui vivent à l'embouchure de la rivière Fly dans le golfe de Papouasie, ce même axe est également un important principe d'orientation. La maison des hommes est orientée selon cet axe et, lors des cérémonies, on y pénètre par la porte du pignon est; la porte opposée, à l'ouest, indique la direction du pays des morts. On dit du soleil qu'il emporte avec lui l'esprit du défunt jusqu'au pays des morts. Lors des funérailles, le corps est porté avec la tête en direction de l'ouest et c'est dans cette position qu'il est exposé sur une plate-forme où il se décompose (Landtman, 1927:257-63). En d'autres termes, nous dit van Baal (1966:219), la course du soleil symbolise le cours de l'existence humaine.

On pourrait multiplier les exemples, tant en Mélanésie qu'ailleurs dans le monde (Eliade, 1959b:125-8) mais il nous suffira ici de noter que chez un certain nombre de populations du sud de la Nouvelle-Guinée, des Asmat aux Elema, la course du soleil, le trajet parcouru par le héros civilisateur, le cycle de vie des humains sont unis dans une relation symbolique très riche qui n'oublie pas la "zone obscure" du symbolisme solaire, en particulier la relation avec le monde des morts et l'initiation.

Revenons maintenant au *jipae* des Asmat pour regretter que nos sources ne nous permettent pas de déterminer avec certitude si cette danse ne fait qu'évoquer le casoar-soleil, si elle met en scène ce qui est censé se passer au même moment dans l'au-delà, ou si elle rappelle explicitement des événements primordiaux dans lesquels cet oiseau aurait joué un rôle, ces trois perspectives ne s'excluant du reste pas l'une l'autre. Une chose paraît évidente, cependant: par le truchement du masque, le défunt est identifié avec le casoar-soleil et cette identification facilite le passage du mort dans l'au-delà.

Selon van Renselaar, les danseurs masqués sont tués symboliquement au lever du soleil de façon à empêcher les morts de revenir s'il leur prenait l'envie de suivre l'exemple du soleil. Ensuite de quoi, les masques sont dépouillés de leurs ornements et conservés dans la maison des hommes. Ils n'ont plus aucune valeur et ne seront portés à nouveau qu'à l'occasion d'une éventuelle expédition guerrière, pour effrayer l'ennemi.

Pour compléter l'interprétation de cet épisode, il faudrait pouvoir le rapprocher de divers autres "meurtres" attestés en Nouvelle-Guinée (par ex. Williams, 1940:373-6; Lewis, 1922:9) ou dans d'autres populations de Mélanésie (par ex. Poole, 1943:224). Malheureusement, ces "meurtres" n'ont à ce jour reçu aucune explication satisfaisante. Layard pensait avoir trouvé la réponse dans un rituel de Malekula, le *ne-leng*, dont nous parlerons plus loin mais où la "victime" est la Gardienne de l'au-delà qui empêche le mort d'accéder à l'autre monde et menace de le dévorer. Le meurtre, dans ce cas, permet au défunt d'atteindre le pays des morts, alors que dans l'interprétation rapportée par van Renselaar, il empêche les défunt d'en revenir. Il est difficile de négliger une telle différence. Relevons du reste que ce thème du meurtre ne se limite ni à la Mélanésie (voir par exemple un cas brésilien dans Hartmann,

1977:106), ni aux figures masquées (Deacon, 1934b:461-8; Layard, 1942:384-5). Le problème est rendu d'autant plus complexe qu'il est parfois difficile de distinguer le thème du "meurtre" des variantes d'un autre motif également très répandu et selon lequel le premier mort ne ressentait aucune urgence à quitter le monde des vivants; importunés par l'odeur, ceux-ci durent le chasser et l'obliger à se rendre au pays des morts (Nevermann, 1972:118; voir aussi van Baal, 1966:200, où le premier mort profite d'une éclipse de soleil pour sortir de sa tombe, obligeant sa veuve à le chasser). La mise en scène de ce thème comporte aussi fréquemment un combat simulé. Le "meurtre" pourrait éventuellement être rapproché de ces cas de compensation dans lesquels les danseurs masqués doivent faire des cadeaux aux parents du défunt qu'ils ont personnifié afin de soulager par ces présents les violentes émotions de chagrin et de deuil qu'ils ont provoquées (Pouwer, 1956:384) et à ces cas où les danseurs (non masqués en l'occurrence), bien que déjà sérieusement brûlés aux épaules par les parents accablés de douleur, doivent encore payer une compensation à ceux qu'ils ont fait pleurer (Schieffelin, 1976:24, 204-10). D'un point de vue psychologique, le "meurtre" pourrait peut-être constituer une semblable compensation. Mais cette question est loin d'être simple et son étude sortirait du cadre du présent article. Nous nous en tiendrons donc pour l'instant à l'interprétation fournie par van Renselaar.

Les masques perdent toute valeur rituelle à la fin du *jipae*. Ce phénomène, assez répandu, a souvent surpris les observateurs de sociétés à masques. Ainsi, Williams se demandait pourquoi il fallait que les *hevehe* des Elema soient tués et détruits à la fin d'un cycle rituel pour être ensuite recréés pour le cycle suivant, alors qu'ils auraient fort bien pu passer d'un cycle à l'autre. Il s'étonnait de voir ainsi disparaître en un instant le produit d'années de travail et d'art (Williams, 1940:375-76; cf. Kiki, 1971:48). Le même raisonnement pourrait se tenir, entre autres, à propos des *malanggan* car, avant l'arrivée des blancs, eux-aussi étaient détruits par le feu à la fin des cérémonies (Bühler, 1969:187). Notre étonnement devant ces abandons et ces destructions révèle un double préjugé: notre intérêt pour l'objet en tant qu'œuvre d'art nous fait privilégier le "produit fini" et minimiser la valeur rituelle de sa fabrication; de même, nous avons tendance à regarder les cérémonies comme des

représentations, et à considérer que tout ce qui a précédé trouve son sens dans ces représentations. C'est là une vision très imparfaite de ces cycles rituels. En effet, la fabrication des *malanggan*, par exemple, avec ses périodes fixées ayant chacune un nom et couvrant un laps de temps déterminé, scandée de danses, de sacrifices et d'offrandes, est elle-aussi un rituel où sont reproduites les phases de la création de l'objet archétype (Girard, 1954:264). Dès lors, il est essentiel qu'au cycle suivant cette répétition soit reprise à son début, c'est-à-dire dès le processus de fabrication des différents objets. C'est également le cas pour de nombreux masques et c'est très probablement ce qui explique qu'on puisse les détruire ou les laisser pourrir sans regrets à la fin du cycle. Mais cela ne saurait malheureusement suffire à expliquer le thème du "meurtre".

Les Kiwai, pour lesquels nous avons vu plus haut l'importance que revêt le symbolisme solaire, connaissent un rituel appelé *hóriómu* dont la description, donnée par Landtman, peut être résumée comme suit: Toute la population mâle prend part à la cérémonie et représente une troupe importante de personnages surnaturels divers, chacun de ces personnages ou des groupes témoignant d'une individualité accusée. Certains danseurs sont censés représenter des esprits individuels, en particulier ceux de personnes récemment décédées. Pour entretenir l'illusion auprès des femmes, on recourt à divers moyens. Lors de l'ensevelissement d'un défunt, on mesure sa taille à l'aide d'un bâton et, pendant l'*hóriómu*, cet esprit est personnifié par un homme de la même taille. Lorsque c'est l'esprit d'un enfant qui est censé apparaître, on dit aux femmes qu'il a grandi après la mort. Chaque esprit porte les ornements du défunt qu'il représente. Pour parachever la duperie, ces ornements sont ensuite soumis à l'examen des femmes et ils ne sont jamais portés par un autre danseur que leur prétendu propriétaire (Landtman, 1927:327, 335).

Selon Landtman, les morts demandent à être honorés dans le rituel de l'*hóriómu*; c'est pourquoi les Kiwai tiennent à ce que chacun de leurs parents récemment décédés soit représenté par quelqu'un parmi les autres morts. Ils se demandent les uns aux autres de remplir cet office et récompensent les danseurs en leur offrant de la nourriture (Landtman, 1927:335). Cette interprétation a été reprise textuellement par Lévy-Bruhl (1963:131). Pour sa

part, Nevermann a vu dans l'*hóriómu* la marque d'une "religion qui insiste plus spécialement sur le culte des morts et a recours à des acteurs masqués pour jouer le rôle des défunt" (1972:120).

Il est difficile de se contenter de ces interprétations. De fait, si l'*hóriómu* avait pour but d'honorer les défunt en général ou était la manifestation d'un culte des morts, on pourrait s'attendre à y trouver le souci que tous les défunt, récents ou non, soient honorés. Tel n'est pas le cas. Pourquoi, alors, cette insistence sur les morts récents et pourquoi une telle importance est-elle attachée à ce qu'ils soient représentés dans le rituel? On est en droit de supposer que, dans ce cas également, cette préoccupation particulière pour les morts récents renvoie à la nécessité rituelle de faciliter le passage du défunt au pays des morts. Seule cette explication nous permet de comprendre pourquoi il est si important que tous les défunt récents soient personnifiés. Enfin, cette interprétation nous permet de saisir pourquoi quiconque personnifie un mort durant l'*hóriómu* bénéficie ensuite de son aide pour harponner les dugongs (Landtman, 1927:335): n'est-il pas naturel que le défunt assiste celui qui l'a lui-même aidé à atteindre le pays des morts?

S'il n'y a guère de doute que les danseurs masqués aident les morts à rallier leur destination finale, nos sources ne nous permettent malheureusement pas de déterminer si ce dessein est accompli par le biais du rappel d'événements primordiaux, en faisant jouer au défunt le rôle du premier mort, d'un dieu, d'un héros civilisateur ou de tel ancêtre particulier.

Tournons-nous maintenant vers un type de danse qui est exécuté sur tout le territoire de l'île de Malekula (Vanuatu) et qu'on appelle *ne-leng* dans le district de Seniang, *na-ling* dans le Nord et *na-leng* sur Atchin (petite île très proche de la côte orientale de Malekula). Ces *ne-leng* sont des danses spectaculaires, d'une grande précision formelle, qu'on exécute de jour devant un public composé entre autres de populations voisines qui peuvent se produire à cette occasion. On note de grandes différences selon l'endroit où la danse est observée: dans certains cas, elle comporte des danseurs masqués alors que dans d'autres, nous dit-on, les danseurs ont le visage couvert d'un voile et portent sur la tête l'image sculptée ou modelée du personnage qu'ils représentent; ailleurs encore, les danseurs sont peints pour indiquer les personnages qu'ils représentent. Parfois,

un certain nombre de représentations différentes s'étalent sur une période assez longue, alors qu'ailleurs il n'y a qu'une seule exécution.

Nous nous limiterons ici à un exemple, observé par Deacon (1934b:469-74) dans le district de Seniang (sud-ouest de Malekula). Dans ce *ne-leng*, tous les protagonistes représentés dans les danses distinctes observées par Layard sur Atchin (1936:147-70; 1942:336-44), de même qu'un certain nombre de personnages non attestés sur Atchin, sont regroupés dans une seule représentation dramatique qui, selon Layard, fournit la clé de tout ce complexe rituel (1936:161). Je suis obligé de résumer considérablement la description de cette danse et de la réduire à quelques éléments, en renvoyant le lecteur soit à la relation qu'en donne Deacon, soit à la présentation et à l'interprétation qu'en fournit Layard (1936:161-70).

Un groupe de quinze hommes prend position au centre de la place. Ils sont disposés en cinq colonnes de trois hommes chacune et forment une structure labyrinthienne qui n'est pas sans rappeler les dessins géométriques de type labyrinthique qui ont également été observés à Malekula (Deacon, 1934a; Layard, 1936; 1942:649-83). En plus de ce "chœur" et du danseur principal, les participants comprennent également dix hommes et deux femmes qui, individuellement ou par paires, jouent un rôle distinct dans la représentation et ont chacun un titre particulier. Le rôle exact attribué à chaque participant peut être interprété différemment selon la manière dont on comprend la danse en tant que tout. Deacon a dû reconnaître son ignorance de la signification de la représentation (1934b:474). Pour sa part, Layard a fondé son interprétation sur la connaissance qu'il avait d'autres rituels semblables: il avait notamment eu l'occasion de danser dans un *na-leng* sur Atchin. Pour lui, il était clair que la danse était une dramatisation du voyage du mort (1936:153). Ainsi, selon lui, le danseur principal correspondait à l'esprit du mort pendant ce voyage (164). Divers aspects de la danse semblent confirmer cette interprétation. Par exemple, le fait que le personnage nommé "l'homme qui tire sur le *ne-leng*" chante un texte qui dit "il tire sur la *sap*", c'est-à-dire sur Temes Sav-sap, la Gardienne de l'au-delà, qui efface la moitié du dessin labyrinthique nommé "le passage" (*Nahal*) et dévore les morts qui n'arrivent pas

à le reconstituer. Cette partie du *ne-leng* semble bien rappeler les aventures du guerrier défunt qui, incapable de compléter le *Nahal*, retourna chez les vivants pour prendre un arc et des flèches, tua la Gardienne de l'au-delà et réussit ainsi à atteindre sain et sauf le pays des morts (Deacon, 1934a:130-1; Layard, 1934:125; 1936:167).

Quand bien même il confirme que les danses *na-leng* sont basées sur un rituel mortuaire (1936:152) et que l'idée maîtresse du voyage supposé du mort n'est pas la mort, mais la vie renouvelée par l'association avec des ancêtres défunts menant une existence au-delà de la tombe (131; cf. 169), Layard n'interprète pas le *ne-leng* comme se préoccupant du défunt, mais plutôt comme un rituel d'initiation dans lequel le danseur principal, bien que considéré comme correspondant à l'esprit du mort, est un néophyte bien vivant postulant pour son admission. Dans son interprétation, Layard se fonde dans une large mesure sur sa conviction que, dans les danses de Malekula, tous les personnages censés représenter des esprits portent des masques. Or, comme le principal danseur décrit par Deacon ne porte pas un masque mais une coiffure, il s'en suit qu'il ne représente pas un défunt mais qu'il est plutôt un candidat vivant participant à un rite vivant (151-2).

Ce problème de la distinction entre masque et coiffure a été constamment présent dans l'ethnographie de la Mélanésie. Au siècle passé, Codrington s'en préoccupait déjà à propos des *tamate* des Iles Banks (1891:77-80). Depuis, la question a été sans cesse reprise; elle a par exemple resurgi récemment à propos de rites des Kilenge (nord-ouest de la Nouvelle-Bretagne) pour lesquels Dark (1973) parle de masques alors que Zelenietz et Grant (1980) soutiennent qu'il s'agit de chapeaux. En fait, cette question nous renvoie au problème beaucoup plus large de la définition du masque. Rappelons qu'on a désigné par ce terme toute représentation d'une face, qu'elle soit portée ou non sur le visage d'un danseur (ce qui englobe par conséquent certaines effigies, les masques-pendentifs et les masques de doigt); dans divers cas, on a également inclus dans la définition tout élément porté devant la face (y compris, voiles, voilettes, etc.). Enfin, certains ont souhaité élargir la définition aux peintures et aux tatouages. Jedrej a donc peut-être raison d'affirmer que le terme de "masque" ne correspond à aucune classe

cohérente d'institutions qui puisse être d'une quelconque utilité à l'anthropologie sociale (1980:220). Sans vouloir régler ici un problème qui sort du cadre de cet article, force nous est de reconnaître, cependant, que la solution de continuité que de nombreux auteurs ont voulu marquer entre certains masques et certaines coiffures en tant qu'objets ne se retrouve pas toujours dans le rôle joué par ces objets dans les rituels où ils ont été observés.

Considérant ce qu'on sait de la Mélanésie en général et de Malekula en particulier, l'interprétation de Layard peut être — et a été — mise en question. Ainsi, Nevermann (1972:110-1) interprète la danse d'une manière différente, considérant que le danseur principal "incarne" un défunt. Pour lui, cette danse serait exécutée de façon à garantir au mort un bon voyage dans l'au-delà. Ces deux opinions ne sont pas nécessairement contradictoires. En effet, une partie essentielle de l'initiation consiste à apprendre les dessins géométriques, c'est-à-dire le chemin de la demeure des morts, et à se préparer ainsi à rencontrer la Gardienne de l'au-delà. Cette rencontre constitue donc une épreuve initiatique post-mortem (Eliade, 1959a:128; cf. van Baal, 1966:203-4). Par conséquent, on peut fort bien concevoir que le mort, au moment où il passe cette épreuve, soit représenté par un néophyte. Et comme la danse renvoie au paradigme de ce scénario, le *ne-leng* mettrait en scène, dans certains cas au moins, des événements se déroulant simultanément à trois niveaux, mais confondus, identifiés les uns aux autres: le rite vivant pour le néophyte, l'épreuve post-mortem pour le défunt, et les événements primordiaux pour le personnage mythique. Le danseur serait donc tout à la fois le néophyte, le mort et la figure paradigmique. Par l'identification du mort avec son modèle, il aiderait le défunt à atteindre sans encombres le pays des morts. Le *ne-leng* se préoccupera donc, entre autres (nous ne nous intéressons pas ici à ses aspects socio-économique et esthétique, par exemple), de l'initiation des vivants et de l'accession des morts à leur nouveau statut, les deux fonctions étant parfois combinées dans un seul rituel alors qu'elles resteraient distinctes dans d'autres cas.

Chez les Mali, un sous-groupe des Baining de la région du sud-est de la péninsule de la Gazelle (Nouvelle-Bretagne), le but principal des fêtes masquées appelées *mandas* est la représentation d'événements qui se sont déroulés dans le temps mythique primordial.

Tandis qu'un chœur de femmes chante l'histoire de la création, des masques représentent ses diverses phases: la naissance de la mer, l'apparition de la terre, de la forêt primordiale, de la flore, des vents, des animaux et des oiseaux et, lorsque la scène a été ainsi préparée, l'apparition du premier couple humain et de ses fils (Laufer, 1959:925-31; 1970:179-82).

Ce qui nous retiendra brièvement ici, c'est que le premier jour de ces *mandas* est dédié à la mémoire de ceux qui sont morts pendant l'année écoulée. A cette occasion, deux masques *sôlevep* apparaissent qui représentent des vertèbres. Malheureusement, s'il nous décrit les divers pas de danse qui sont exécutés ainsi que les manifestations de deuil qui s'observent, Laufer ne nous dit rien de la signification exacte de ces deux masques et de leur comportement (Laufer, 1970:178-9). Dès le deuxième jour de la cérémonie commence la représentation des événements primordiaux et, avec elle, la participation active des jeunes initiés (Laufer, 1959:930; 1970:179).

Notre source ne nous permet pas de pousser très loin l'interprétation du premier jour de la cérémonie. Il est cependant intéressant de noter qu'ici encore nous trouvons trois éléments que nous avons déjà notés ailleurs: la préoccupation pour les morts récents, exprimée dans le cadre d'une cérémonie qui rappelle les temps primordiaux et sert d'arrière-plan à l'initiation.

S'il y a un type de masque que la littérature a constamment associé à la représentation de morts, c'est-à-dire de défunts historiques précis, c'est certainement le masque-crâne. Des spécialistes ont été tentés de voir dans ce masque-crâne la forme la plus primitive du masque (par ex. Nevermann, 1972:123). Cette opinion découle d'une théorie généticocronologique du masque formulée par Frobenius et qui postule un développement logique partant de l'usage du crâne pour passer au masque-crâne et aboutir finalement au masque sculpté dans le bois (1898:185). Est-il nécessaire de préciser que, dans l'état actuel de nos connaissances, rien ne permet de démontrer la validité de cette élégante hypothèse, fondée exclusivement sur des considérations théoriques?

En Mélanésie, la technique qui consiste à remodeler ou à surmouler tout ou partie du crâne avec une sorte de cire, de le peindre et, souvent, de le parer de cheveux humains collés, ne se limite pas

à la fabrication de masques. Elle est utilisée pour la confection de mannequins funéraires appelés *rambaramp* dans le sud de Malekula. Elle est également utilisée pour les têtes surmodelées qu'on trouve notamment dans la région du Sepik en Nouvelle-Guinée, têtes qui étaient conservées de diverses manières: certaines fichées sur des supports pointus spéciaux dans les maisons de culte, d'autres exposées dans les maisons d'habitation ou conservées là dans une sorte de filet ou de sac (Bühler, 1969:92-96; Krämer, 1925:49). A noter que la même technique était également employée pour modeler une tête humaine sur un support de bois, etc. (Bühler, 1969:100, 194-8; Girard, 1954:256). C'est pourquoi tous les crânes surmodelés ont parfois été considérés comme appartenant à une seule catégorie (par ex. Frobenius, 1897-8,5:163; Speiser, 1934:170-1). De même, on a souvent insisté dans la littérature sur le fait que les masques-crânes devaient représenter des morts récents, connus des spectateurs, et qu'on les préparait en recherchant la plus grande ressemblance possible avec le défunt. Certains ont même voulu y voir l'origine de l'art du portrait (Lips, 1959:235). Cette conception est probablement valable pour les *rambaramp* dont la fabrication n'est pas sans rappeler ce que nous avons vu à propos de l'*hóriómu* puisque, par exemple, les proportions des membres du défunt sont reproduites sur le mannequin grâce aux mesures prises sur les os du squelette (Guiaart, 1949:75). Mais en ce qui concerne les masques-crânes au sens strict, il convient de tempérer cette opinion. Bartels relevait déjà que cette théorie ne s'appliquait probablement qu'à 19 des 36 masques qu'il avait examinés (1896:241).

La large diffusion de la technique du surmodelage est l'un des éléments qui ont encouragé Frobenius à penser qu'à une certaine époque le masque-crâne avait dû être beaucoup plus largement répandu en Mélanésie (Frobenius, 1897-8,1:69; 5:163-4). Plus récemment, cependant, Damm a plaidé en faveur de l'établissement d'une distinction beaucoup plus tranchée entre les masques-crânes et les autres têtes surmodelées (1969). Il relève que, quelques exceptions mises à part, tous les masques-crânes océaniens que nous connaissons proviennent de la péninsule de la Gazelle (85) et, après un examen critique de la littérature — souvent contradictoire, comme Frobenius l'avait déjà relevé (1897-8,5:162-3) — il distingue deux types de masques, principalement sur la base de leur

aspect extérieur. En résumant son analyse détaillée, on peut définir les types en question de la manière suivante: (1) visage complètement surmodelé avec yeux ouverts et nez reconstitué et (2) face dont seule la moitié inférieure est surmodelée avec yeux occlus et nez de tête de mort (1969:113). Malheureusement, les observateurs du siècle dernier ont consacré trop peu d'attention à la fonction et à la signification de ces masques, de sorte que beaucoup des questions qu'on se pose à leur propos ne seront jamais résolues. Par exemple, il est impossible de dire avec une quelconque certitude comment les masques de type 2 étaient portés et si oui ou non ils participaient à une danse. Quant au type 1, nous savons qu'il était utilisé dans des danses accompagnées par le battement du tambour et le chant des femmes. Mais nous n'avons aucune idée du détail de ces danses ou du texte qui les accompagnait. Damm parle de danses extatiques (1969:113). Sur la base de ce que nous savons des effigies comme le *rambaramp*, d'une part, et d'autres masques mélanésiens représentant des individus défunt, d'autre part, on peut se demander si le masque-crâne n'était pas utilisé d'une manière similaire à celle que nous avons décrite plus haut. Mais les documents à disposition sont malheureusement beaucoup trop pauvres pour garantir quelque interprétation que ce soit, celle de Damm ou une autre.

Mentionnons pour terminer la cérémonie appelée *mbii-kawané* (lit. plate-forme aux esprits) observée par Pouwer (1956) à Mimika (Irian Jaya). La *mbii-kawané* fait partie d'un rituel étroitement lié au décès d'un ou de plusieurs membres de la communauté. Par ce rituel, nous dit Pouwer (375), un hommage enthousiaste est rendu aux individus d'une certaine importance décédés récemment, afin de s'assurer que leur esprit se retire satisfait et content au pays des morts, très loin dans la montagne. Les morts sont représentés par des hommes masqués. Dans le cas observé par Pouwer, deux défunt étaient représentés sur la scène et il était évident que des considérations personnelles, familiales et de groupe avaient joué un rôle dans le choix des personnes qu'il convenait d'honorer.

La cérémonie masquée est précédée, dans l'après-midi, de danses exécutées sur la plate-forme par des femmes. Vers dix-sept heures, le premier couple de danseurs masqués émerge de la forêt. Ils agitent violemment leurs franges, remuent les bras et titubent comme des ivrognes. Au moment où ils vont monter sur la plate-

forme, les trois plus proches parents des défunts leur tournent autour dans un paroxysme d'émotion en chantant des lamentations. Les personnages masqués grimpent alors sur la scène où ils s'asseyent, jambes ballantes. Immédiatement, les hommes et les femmes qui se tiennent devant la plate-forme les saisissent par les jambes, les hanches, les pieds, le dos, et les frottent, les tirent et s'y pendent comme ils ont coutume de le faire, au plus haut degré de leur douleur, avec les restes mortels d'un parent décédé. Ils pleurent passionnément et sans arrêt, appelant les morts du nom par lequel on s'adressait à eux quand ils étaient vivants (382).

On joue ensuite une pantomime destinée à mettre en valeur les compétences qui étaient celles des défunts durant leur existence. Les danseurs masqués défient les spectateurs, se demandant si les vivants seront capables de s'en sortir sans les morts. Les vivants répliquent qu'ils connaissent tous les tours et toutes les finesse (de la chasse au cochon, de la pêche, etc.). Par conséquent, les défunts ne sont pas indispensables; il n'y a aucune raison qu'ils restent avec les vivants puisque ceux-ci peuvent se débrouiller sans eux. Cette pantomime est répétée plusieurs fois (cinq dans l'exemple rapporté par Pouwer, 1956:383), les masques étant à chaque fois portés par de nouveaux danseurs. Théoriquement, les maris des sœurs et des filles des défunts, au sens tant réel que classificatoire, sont tous censés les personnaliser chacun à son tour. Mais, en pratique, la cérémonie ne dure pas assez longtemps pour le permettre. Après un certain temps, les esprits se lèvent et quittent le village en trottinant, de leur propre initiative. Ils ne sont pas chassés (384).

Il ne fait aucun doute que, dans ce rituel, les masques représentent des membres défunts de la communauté. Dans ce cas également, ils personnifient des individus morts récemment et, une fois encore, il y a un élément qui nous incite à penser que ce rituel ne se limite pas à représenter des êtres humains décédés: lorsque le premier couple de personnages masqués émerge de la forêt, le chef du village crie à voix haute le nom des deux héros civilisateurs qui, par leur comportement violent, sont censés avoir provoqué une migration et à qui l'origine de cette danse masquée est attribuée (381). Dès lors, n'est-il pas raisonnable de supposer que le nom des héros civilisateurs est prononcé parce que les masques, tout en personnifiant les défunts, représentent aussi ces héros? Dans ce cas, les

morts récents seraient donc également identifiés à des personnages paradigmatisques.

Pour saisir le sens des rituels que nous venons de résumer, il faut se rappeler que, pour nombre de populations, en Mélanésie comme ailleurs dans le monde, les funérailles n'apportent qu'une solution provisoire au désordre introduit par la mort. Leur succède alors une période extrêmement délicate pendant laquelle les transformations qui suivent le décès ne sont pas achevées. Les risques propres à cette période sont de deux ordres. Tout d'abord, la présence non contrôlée des principes spirituels des morts parmi les vivants présente un danger potentiel (de contagion, de séduction, etc.). Il convient donc de s'assurer que ces principes spirituels n'errent plus dans le monde des vivants mais parviennent à l'endroit et au statut qui doivent être les leurs. On exécute donc le rituel qui va favoriser et permettre l'accession du mort à son nouvel état. Car, comme l'a fort bien relevé Layard, ce n'est pas la mort mais le rituel qui ouvre la voie vers la vie future (1934:118).

Le rituel étant nécessaire à l'accession du mort à son statut définitif, il s'en suit que le défunt pour lequel le rituel n'a pas été célébré demeure dans un état d'instabilité et de profonde insatisfaction. Il est par conséquent susceptible d'agir contre les vivants, pas nécessairement dans un esprit de vengeance courroucée, mais de façon à les inciter à célébrer le rituel approprié (cf. Elkin, 1964:326). Ce danger s'ajoute à celui que fait courir la présence des principes spirituels des morts parmi les vivants. La remise en ordre à laquelle procède le rituel permet donc, entre autres, d'écartier ces deux risques. D'où le soulagement des vivants et des morts après l'exécution de la cérémonie. Un informateur de Pouwer ne déclarait-il pas, après la *mbii-kawané*: Maintenant les morts sont satisfaits. Maintenant nous pouvons aller partout, dans les bois et le long de la rivière, sans crainte d'être rendus malades. Nous avons honoré les morts. Nous aussi nous sommes contents et joyeux. Maintenant, nous pouvons laisser les morts reposer (Pouwer, 1956:384).

Nous l'avons vu, le rituel nécessaire est souvent très coûteux. Peut-être est-ce ce facteur qui explique que, dans certaines sociétés, seuls les défunts d'une certaine importance socio-économique en bénéficient? Dans d'autres cas, les familles attendent d'avoir plu-

sieurs morts dont il faut régler le statut afin de les grouper dans la célébration d'un seul rituel, ce qui a pour effet de prolonger cette période d'errance et d'attente durant laquelle le mort est malheureux et risque d'intervenir pour amener les vivants à célébrer le rituel. D'où une tension et une crainte accrues, qui ont souvent été interprétées comme découlant d'une peur générale des morts. A tort, fort probablement, car on ne craint pas tous les morts mais ceux dont le statut n'a pas été réglé (Pernet, 1979:265-80).

C'est donc à l'intérieur de ce rituel qu'interviennent les masques représentant des défunt. Même si nos sources sont assez avares de renseignements précis et détaillés, il est possible de tirer un certain nombre de conclusions. Par exemple, il n'est pas question qu'un individu quelconque décide, simplement parce qu'il en a envie, d'organiser un rituel dans lequel il représenterait un mort pris au hasard. Le porteur doit être apparenté au mort, et pas à n'importe quel degré, ou il doit faire partie d'un clan ou d'un village qui est habilité à représenter ce défunt en raison de relations parfois complexes fondées sur la réciprocité et l'échange. Le port du masque est donc un service, un service qui peut être une source d'honneur et de prestige, certes, mais qui peut également entraîner des obligations assez lourdes, comme par exemple l'adoption des enfants du mort chez les Asmat. Cette idée de service semble assez peu compatible avec les théories des divers auteurs qui ont voulu voir l'"origine" ou l'"essence" du masque dans le désir d'adopter une autre personnalité, désir poussé parfois jusqu'à la recherche de l'extase et pouvant conduire au délire et à la frénésie. Ces mêmes auteurs se sont également passionnés pour la relation du porteur avec le personnage représenté par le masque, relation qui a le plus souvent été présentée comme impliquant la dissolution du moi du porteur, l'incarnation de l'esprit dans le porteur. Ayant eu l'occasion d'examiner ces théories ailleurs (Pernet, 1979:159-96), je n'y reviendrai pas ici, si ce n'est pour souligner le fait qu'obnubilés par cette relation porteur-masque et par l'idée que, par cette relation, le porteur adopte une autre personnalité, ces auteurs semblent ne pas avoir perçu que le masque pouvait avoir pour principal objet d'associer ou d'identifier, non pas (ou pas seulement) le porteur avec l'esprit du mort, mais surtout le mort avec son paradigme (premier mort, héros civilisateur, etc.). C'est pourtant, semble-t-il, l'élément le

plus important que nous révèlent les rituels que nous venons de voir.

Cette identification peut prendre diverses formes qui se situent entre deux pôles extrêmes: dans certains cas, on ne fait rien pour rapprocher l'apparence du personnage masqué de celle du défunt et c'est l'attitude de l'entourage qui manifeste cette identification, les vivants se comportant à l'égard de la figure masquée comme ils le feraient à l'égard du défunt qu'ils pleurent. Dans d'autres cas, on fait un effort considérable pour que le personnage masqué ressemble le plus possible au défunt, auquel cas l'identification au personnage paradigmique se marque dans le texte qui est récité ou chanté, dans les pas de danse exécutés, etc. Nous avons vu plus haut qu'on pouvait parfois se demander si ce qui était représenté dans le rituel correspondait aux événements primordiaux ou à ce qu'il advenait du défunt dans l'*au-delà* au moment de la célébration. En fait, c'est un faux problème: ce que le défunt vit dans l'*au-delà* correspond précisément à ce qui est arrivé à l'époque des commencements, de sorte que le mort ne peut que suivre l'itinéraire parcouru à l'origine par son modèle et connaître les étapes et les épreuves qu'a connues le personnage paradigmique. Comme l'un des buts de l'initiation est justement de transmettre la connaissance de cet itinéraire et de ces épreuves afin que l'initié soit en mesure de réussir son passage, il n'est pas surprenant que la participation à ce rituel marque une étape de l'initiation et que préparation des vivants et souci du sort des morts puissent y être combinés. A l'intérieur de ce rituel, les femmes jouent un rôle important dont un des aspects consiste à renforcer, à confirmer cette identification en se comportant à l'égard du masque comme elles le feraient à l'égard du défunt lui-même (cf. par ex. Groves, 1936:226). Prendre prétexte de ce rôle rituel pour affirmer que les femmes sont l'objet d'une duperie et qu'elles ne savent pas qu'elles ont affaire à des hommes masqués revient à méconnaître un élément essentiel de ce type de cérémonie (Pernet, 1982).

Seuls quelques rituels mélanésiens ont été abordés dans le présent article. Il va de soi que, pour être complète, cette discussion devrait se poursuivre par l'examen des nombreuses cérémonies similaires observées ailleurs en Mélanésie et dans le monde. Il faudrait aussi déterminer dans quelle mesure ce qui a été dit de ces

masques mélanésiens ne se vérifierait pas également pour un nombre important de masques funéraires. Une telle étude dépasserait le cadre du présent travail qui se proposait uniquement de montrer que, lorsque nous rencontrons des masques qui représentent explicitement des défunt, rien ne nous autorise à limiter notre interprétation à cette seule constatation puisque les rituels mélanésiens nous montrent qu'en permettant de faire jouer au mort le rôle de son modèle mythique, en rappelant tout à la fois les événements primordiaux et les étapes de l'itinéraire du défunt, le masque réalise une opération dont la signification, la complexité et l'importance dépassent largement ce que laisserait penser la simple équation masque = mort.

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## MONACHISME ET MARRANISME CHEZ LES MANICHEENS D'EGYPTE\*

G. STROUMSA

Dans sa grandiose et baroque *Temptation de Saint Antoine*, Gustave Flaubert nous montre Antoine quittant une Alexandrie dont les souks fourmillent d'hérétiques en tout genre, pour ne retrouver, au désert, les tentations spirituelles de Basilide, de Valentin ou d'Arius, aux côtés de Mani, que dans les hallucinations de sa solitude. L'érudition de Flaubert est impressionnante, mais peut-être a-t-elle fait ici s'égarer son imagination. Dans ce modèle de toutes les hagiographies chrétiennes qu'est la *Vita Antonii*, déjà Athanase avait décrit le Saint, aux premières années de son anachorèse, comme absolument solitaire — tout au plus aurait-il rencontré, dans le désert, un ou deux vieux ermites qui l'y auraient précédé.<sup>1</sup> “Et le désert devint une cité” écrit Athanase,<sup>2</sup> s'efforçant de montrer comment, à la suite d'Antoine, d'innombrables ascètes chrétiens prirent le chemin du désert égyptien. Les causes et les condi-

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tions précises de ce phénomène étonnant, que nous révèle l'histoire des moines d'Egypte au quatrième siècle, nous échappent toujours. Mais même l'anti-cité désertique n'est pas le paradis: bon gré malgré, ses habitants reflètent les réalités urbaines qu'ils ont fui; on retrouve parmi eux des méchants. Et l'on peut se demander si la description d'Athanase n'est pas suspecte d'anachronie. Est-il bien vrai qu'Antoine, quand il s'enfuit au désert, le trouva vide — vide, en particulier, des hérétiques, gnostiques de tout bord, et, surtout, des Manichéens? Athanase mentionne qu'Antoine se refusait à discuter avec les Manichéens,<sup>3</sup> ce qui en bonne logique laisse supposer leur existence — et aussi que d'autres, moins saints qu'Antoine, acceptaient le dialogue avec eux.

Le caractère fragmentaire des témoignages ne permet sans doute pas de réponse simple et définitive. Pourtant certains indices, quand on les souligne, permettent peut-être de reconstruire quelques pans d'un passé possible, d'une *Urgeschichte*, ou même d'une *Vorgeschichte* plausibles du monachisme égyptien.

Je voudrais ici, en particulier, aborder certains aspects suggestifs de l'histoire du Manichéisme en Egypte, qui semblent bien y être étroitement liés.

Toute étude du Manichéisme égyptien se heurte dès l'abord au paradoxe de sources qui ne nous renseignent que fort peu sur le caractère spécifique qu'a pu prendre dans la vallée du Nil cette religion venue d'Orient, et qui, à l'encontre de diverses sectes gnostiques, avait certainement gardé les traits supra-nationaux de sa théologie.

Les nombreux textes manichéens découverts en Egypte, en copte surtout, mais aussi en grec, sont certes d'une importance capitale pour l'étude de la théologie et de l'histoire du Manichéisme primitif, mais il s'agit toujours de traductions de textes originellement écrits en araméen et ne reflétant qu'indirectement, de ce fait, un *Sitz im Leben* égyptien. Les textes de polémique anti-manichéenne, d'autre part, ne nous renseignent que fort peu sur la réalité historique et sociologique du Manichéisme en Egypte. Tel est le cas, pour ne citer que deux des textes les plus importants, de la réfutation de la mythologie manichéenne due à la plume du philosophe païen Alexandre de Lycopole, ou encore de l'*Adversus Manichaeos* rédigé par l'ami d'Antoine, Sérapion, évêque de Thmuis en Basse Egypte,

et surtout consacré à la lutte contre les positions éthiques (réelles ou supposées) des manichéens.<sup>4</sup>

Malgré la déception immédiate que nous infligent ces textes, cependant, on peut essayer d'en tirer plusieurs indications significatives.

Alexandre, par exemple — qui est par ailleurs un des tous premiers témoins de la diffusion du Manichéisme en Egypte — introduit d'emblée la *καινοτομία* de Mani comme une secte chrétienne hérétique — la plus hérétique de ces sectes — compliquant à outrance la simplicité originelle de la “philosophie chrétienne” (à ses débuts, dit-il, une remarquable école d’instruction éthique).<sup>5</sup> Ce témoignage est significatif: aux alentours de l'an 300 un observateur dont nous n'avons aucune raison de mettre l'objectivité en cause conçoit ainsi le Manichéisme non pas comme la religion *sui generis* du prophète de Babylone, mais comme l'une des hérésies propres au Christianisme.

Nous pouvions supposer depuis longtemps, nous savons maintenant (depuis la publication du Codex Manichéen de Cologne) sans qu'aucun doute puisse subsister à ce sujet, que la conception d'Alexandre représente la réalité. Mani a certes réussi à créer une religion nouvelle, en fait comme en droit de dimensions mondiales, et de structures essentiellement différentes de celles du Christianisme. Cela n'empêche qu'il se voulait, comme Paul, et plus que lui, puisque son Jésus à lui était *Yešu Ziwa*, le Jésus-de-Gloire, ἀπόστολος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.<sup>6</sup> C'est probablement par l'intermédiaire de communautés de marchands, venus de l'Est, que le Manichéisme s'implanta d'abord en Egypte.<sup>7</sup> Dès l'abord, les missionnaires manichéens, dont nous savons de source sûre qu'ils réussirent à faire de nombreuses conversions en Egypte du vivant même de Mani, vers le milieu du troisième siècle,<sup>8</sup> ont ainsi dû se tourner vers les communautés chrétiennes, présentant leur message (ainsi que le fera Fauste un peu plus tard en Afrique) comme plus profond et plus pur que les traditions “enjuivées” des catholiques.<sup>9</sup> Aussi profondes que soient les divergences théologiques entre Christianisme et Manichéisme, il n'est donc plus possible de concevoir l'histoire de leurs rapports en Egypte comme celle des contacts entre deux religions “manifestement distinctes et séparées”, ainsi que le faisait encore récemment R. Grant.<sup>10</sup>

Les voies par lesquelles le Manichéisme s'établit en Egypte nous sont encore pratiquement inconnues. *Prima facie*, la communauté syrienne d'Alexandrie apparaîtrait comme un premier port d'attache probable pour la foi nouvelle, n'était que, sur ce point comme sur d'autres, il semble qu'il faille prêter attention à un passage des *Acta Archelai*, texte dont la superstructure légendaire risque de cacher des indications d'une véritable valeur historique.

Hégémonius, (s'il est bien l'auteur des *Acta*), mentionne la haute Thébaïde comme l'endroit où s'établit Scythianus, le fondateur légendaire de la nouvelle doctrine dualiste; cette région était en effet, dit-il, la province d'origine de la femme qu'il épousa. Epiphane, de façon plus précise, mentionne Hypsele, une localité située à 7 kilomètres au sud de Lycopole, l'Assiout moderne, dans ce contexte.<sup>11</sup>

Que la pénétration du Manichéisme en Egypte ait ou non débuté par la Thébaïde, comme le laisseraient supposer les *Acta Archelai*, il semble tout à fait plausible que cette région devint rapidement un lieu privilégié d'implantation des communautés manichéennes. Rappelons ici seulement que le dialecte copte parlé autour d'Assiout est le subachmimique, dialecte dans lequel sont rédigés les textes manichéens découverts au début des années 30; l'évidence linguistique rend fort improbable que les traductions soient originaires de Medinet Madi, dans le Fayoum, endroit où ils furent trouvés. Ce détail est d'importance, car il suggérerait, joint au témoignage des *Acta Archelai*, que le Manichéisme s'était tôt implanté en Thébaïde parmi des couches de la population comprenant plus facilement le copte que le grec — au plus tard au début du quatrième siècle.

Il faut relever ici le fait que la région d'Assiout semble avoir été favorable à l'éclosion ou au développement de divers mouvements gnostiques, et pas seulement du Manichéisme, ainsi que le montre la bibliothèque de Nag Hammadi. Il faut souligner aussi la présomption, de plus en plus pressante, que la présence de fragments provenant de monastères pachômiens dans le cartonnage des codex de Nag Hammadi implique l'existence de certaines relations — dont on n'a pas encore réussi à définir clairement la nature — entre gnostiques et moines de communautés pachômiennes.<sup>12</sup>

De façon similaire, il semble que l'on puisse retrouver la trace de certains rapports entre Manichéisme et monachisme chrétien.

Reprenez, avant tout, l'indication précieuse fournie par le texte en moyen Iranien M<sup>2</sup> cité plus haut (n. 8), qui nous décrit les débuts de la mission manichéenne en Egypte, sous l'impulsion de Mar Adda, l'un des principaux apôtres de la nouvelle religion. Cet Adda (qu'il n'y a pas de raison d'identifier au *Pappos* d'Alexandre de Lycopole)<sup>13</sup> ne se serait pas seulement distingué en Egypte dans la polémique religieuse et par sa force de persuasion. Il aurait aussi établi — et ce avant 260-261, date à laquelle on le retrouve à l'Est<sup>14</sup> — des *mānistānān*, c'est-à-dire des maisons collectives à l'usage des Elus (*mānistān* provient de *mān*, “demeure”, “habitation”). Henning, et à sa suite Sundermann, traduisent le mot par *Kloster*.<sup>15</sup> Cette traduction est évidemment analogique, et il faut éviter de concevoir le *mānistān* manichéen d'après le modèle du monastère pachômien. Aucun indice précis ne nous laisse deviner l'organisation du *mānistān*, mais il est permis de supposer que les Elus célibataires, “virtuoses” religieux dans le vocabulaire weberien, s'y réunissaient au moins pour prier (plusieurs fois par jour) et pour prendre leurs repas. Comme le souligne L. Koenen, le *mānistān* pourrait avoir été assez proche, dans son organisation, du complexe des bâtiments communautaires découverts à Qumrān.<sup>16</sup>

Quoiqu'il en soit, la traduction *Kloster*, pour *mānistān*, si elle est analogique, n'est pas pure métaphore, et l'existence présumée d'un monachisme manichéen en Egypte, plusieurs décennies avant les premiers établissements cénotitiques chrétiens (la communauté de Tabennesis date de 320) suggère la possibilité d'une influence manichéenne sur les origines et les premiers développements du monachisme chrétien — hypothèse déjà émise par Vergote.<sup>17</sup> La soudaine éruption de ce dernier mouvement, en effet — et ce malgré les efforts conjugués de nombreux chercheurs — reste somme toute assez mal expliquée.

La plupart des hypothèses avancées sur la genèse du monachisme chrétien du quatrième siècle se heurtent en effet à des arguments puissants. Ainsi la thèse des origines indiennes, par exemple, particulièrement prisée par la *religionsgeschichtliche Schule*, ou celle faisant appel aux mouvements ascétiques juifs du premier siècle — qu'il s'agisse de la communauté de Qumrān ou de celles des Thérapeu-

tes, établies, selon le témoignage de Philon, aux alentours d'Alexandrie. Ces hypothèses, séduisantes toutes deux du point de vue phénoménologique, se heurtent au fait qu'elles ne peuvent expliquer par quelles voies la distance, au moins chronologique, qui éloigne ces deux sortes de phénomènes du monachisme chrétien, aurait été couverte.<sup>18</sup>

D'autre part, l'idée que l'apparition soudaine du monachisme chrétien serait totalement explicable par l'évolution inhérente des attitudes ascétiques à l'intérieur du Christianisme ne semble pas non plus devoir emporter la conviction de l'historien. Que le terrain favorable à l'éclosion du monachisme ait été préparé par l'ambivalence fondamentale vis à vis du monde matériel et sensuel que révèlent l'éthique et la théologie chrétienne, ambivalence dont les premiers éléments se retrouvent déjà dans certains versets du Nouveau Testament, cela n'est guère contestable. Mais il n'est pas contestable, non plus, que de cet ascétisme latent seul, le mouvement de masse du monachisme dans l'Egypte (et la Syrie) du quatrième siècle n'aurait pu s'épanouir, sans la présence de catalysateurs extérieurs. Un tel catalyseur, par exemple, dont l'existence a été reconnue depuis longtemps, est le mouvement "laïc" d'exode, d'*anachorèsis*, de nombreux paysans fuyant leurs villages pour échapper aux agents du fisc et aux sergents recruteurs.<sup>19</sup>

Sans vouloir dénier l'importance de tels facteurs sociologiques, il me semble qu'on doit aussi relever certains arguments qui permettent de voir dans un courant spirituel, le Manichéisme, un autre catalyseur du premier monachisme chrétien en Egypte.

On répète souvent que le Manichéisme représente une forme d'ascétisme plus primitive que le monachisme chrétien, et qu'aux Elus manichéens était imposée une vie errante, similaire peut-être à celle en vogue chez les ascètes chrétiens de Syrie et de Babylone, mais fort différente de la vie sédentaire qu'on menait dans les monastères pachômiens. Or cette vue est une abstraction qui n'a pas vraiment de prise sur la réalité. Il semble, au contraire, que là où le Manichéisme a pu prendre pied solidement et développer une structure de monastères, il l'a fait.<sup>20</sup> Témoins les textes chinois et uigours, dont l'étude se poursuit, qui décrivent en détail l'organisation des monastères manichéens d'Asie centrale — à une époque certes plus tardive que la nôtre.<sup>21</sup>

Dès 297, date probable du rescript de Dioclétien contre les Manichéens,<sup>22</sup> on peut suivre l'évolution, dans ses divers épisodes, de la lutte sans merci menée par le pouvoir impérial (païen, puis byzantin) contre les Manichéens.<sup>23</sup> Or certains de ces édits font allusion à des Manichéens menant une vie sédentaire, en séclusion dans le désert, et attaquent leur “fausse prétention à une vie solitaire”.<sup>24</sup>

La désignation de Manichéens comme habitant le désert ne doit pas nous étonner. Le *Codex théodosien*, en effet, témoigne aussi des décrets d'expulsion publiés à diverses reprises contre les Manichéens. Le fait de la publication d'un décret n'implique évidemment pas, en soi, que la mesure ait été appliquée, en totalité ou même en partie, mais la virulence du ton laisse entendre que la poursuite légale du Manichéisme fut particulièrement acharnée; ainsi, l'un des décrets du *Codex* explique que de même que les Manichéens, dans leur théologie, rejettent le monde (c'est-à-dire le monde de la matière) dans sa totalité, de même faut-il les poursuivre sans relâche, jusqu'à ce qu'ils aient été expulsés du monde entier (*ex orbis terrarum*) — c'est-à-dire, pratiquement du monde urbain civilisé.<sup>25</sup>

Il est donc tout à fait possible de concevoir que des Elus manichéens, dont l'existence même était en danger dans les villes et les villages — ce dès avant la fin du troisième siècle — se soient réfugiés dans le désert.

Plutôt que d'y mener, comme toutes sortes d'autres anachorètes, une vie plus ou moins solitaire, les Manichéens ont pu, dans le désert, s'établir dans des communautés monastiques. Il ne fait pas le moindre doute, en effet, que Mani lui-même ait connu d'expérience l'idée d'une telle communauté.

Pensons, avant tout, à la communauté baptiste où il avait grandi.<sup>26</sup> Comme pour *Qumrān*, il est difficile de dire, dans l'état actuel de nos connaissances, s'il s'agissait seulement d'une communauté d'hommes, ou bien si des couples y trouvaient leur place, près des célibataires ou autour d'eux. Quoi qu'il en soit, les structures communautaires chez les Elchasaites semblent avoir été assez développées, et peut-être ressemblaient-elles d'assez près à celles des communautés esséniennes, dont on sait à quel point les premières communautés baptistes judéo-chrétiennes étaient proches. Cette filiation des Esséniens aux Elchasaites, si elle ne peut être

prouvée de façon absolue, est tout à fait probable, et on ne peut sur ce point qu'agréer aux vues de L. Koenen, qui fait remonter à cette filiation l'origine du monachisme manichéen, dont il a réussi à déceler certaines traces dans le Codex Manichéen de Cologne. Koenen, en particulier, relève l'épithète du père de Mani, Pattikios, appelé οἰχοδεσπότης, traduction de l'araméen *rabbaitā*,<sup>27</sup> “Maître de Maison”, et un tel titre laisse probablement sous-entendre une fonction précise dans la collectivité elchasaïte — titre et fonction repris dans l'organisation des communautés monastiques manichéennes.<sup>28</sup>

Mais il y a aussi une autre source possible à laquelle on peut faire remonter la connaissance que Mani aurait eue de structures communautaires monastiques. Je tiens à souligner qu'il ne faut pas voir cette autre source comme concurrente, mais bien comme complémentaire, des structures de la communauté elchasaïte. Il s'agit du monachisme bouddhiste, fort développé du vivant de Mani, et avec lequel il avait très certainement fait connaissance lors de son tout premier voyage missionnaire, effectué au Nord-Ouest de l'Inde.<sup>29</sup>

De source sûre, nous savons en effet qu'à l'occasion de ce voyage, Mani réussit à convertir un roi bouddhiste, qui le prit pour une réincarnation du Bouddha.<sup>30</sup> Cette rencontre du Bouddhisme, on le sait, ne fut pas sans laisser des traces profondes dans la théologie de Mani, pour lequel le Bouddha devint, aux côtés de Zaratoustra et de Jésus, l'un des grands apôtres envoyés par Dieu à l'humanité.<sup>31</sup> Il n'est que difficilement concevable qu'une telle influence théologique se soit réalisée dans l'abstrait, sans que les formes vivantes du Bouddhisme — c'est-à-dire, avant tout, la *sangha* — aient, elles aussi, laissé leur marque sur les conceptions de Mani. Le fait même qu'il soit venu d'un milieu ascétique organisé en communauté ne pouvait que le prédisposer à intégrer à sa pensée les formes nettement plus développées d'organisation monastique qu'il a dû rencontrer lors de son séjour en Inde.

L'idée d'une influence du Bouddhisme indien sur le Manichéisme n'est évidemment pas nouvelle. F. C. Baur, déjà, se fondant sur les données légendaires des *Acta Archelai*, avait tenté — sans grand succès — de faire remonter les principes premiers de la théologie manichéenne à la réflexion religieuse du Bouddhisme.<sup>32</sup> Mais le parallélisme structural entre les deux religions, s'il existe

bien, est à rechercher plutôt dans le domaine de l'organisation que dans celui de la théologie.<sup>33</sup> Dans les deux cas, en effet, seuls les ascètes initiés — la *sangha*, les *electi* — représentent, à proprement parler, le noyau central des fidèles, auxquels la religion offre les moyens du salut. Les laïcs regroupés autour de ces virtuoses ne font pas à proprement parler partie de la communauté bouddhiste ou manichéenne.<sup>34</sup>

Ce parallélisme frappant est d'ailleurs renforcé par celui de certaines pratiques à l'intérieur de la communauté monastique elle-même. H.-C. Puech a déjà noté la similarité de la cérémonie de la confession des péchés chez les moines bouddhistes et les moines manichéens d'Asie Centrale (bien qu'il s'agisse peut-être ici d'une influence bouddhiste plus tardive sur le Manichéisme oriental).<sup>35</sup>

Qu'on préfère mettre l'accent sur les influences indiennes ou sur celles de provenance palestinienne, il ne fait pas de doute que les Manichéens représentaient pour la Chrétienté égyptienne, dès avant la fin du troisième siècle, le type d'un encratisme intégral dont il ne semble pas qu'il ait eu son parallèle chez les orthodoxes. Témoin cet évêque d'Alexandrie, mettant en garde ses brebis, aux alentours de l'an 300, contre les Manichéens pervers qui condamnent le mariage béni par Dieu.<sup>36</sup>

Il y a donc une forte présomption pour qu'il faille cesser d'attribuer à Pachôme la fondation des premières formes de vie cénobitique en Egypte et pour suspecter l'orthodoxie de certaines au moins de ces communautés.

Quand le monachisme se développe parmi les Chrétiens, pendant le quatrième siècle, il semble en effet que le mouvement n'ait pas été tout de suite en odeur de sainteté. Jérôme, par exemple, fait allusion aux excentricités des moines égyptiens;<sup>37</sup> un édit impérial datant de 390 et intégré au *Codex Theodosianus* (16.3.1) impose aux moines de rester dans le désert.<sup>38</sup> L'extrémisme religieux des moines, l'agressivité, parfois même la violence, dont il semble qu'ils savaient faire preuve à l'occasion, ne devaient pas les faire accepter facilement par la société chrétienne urbaine.

Ainsi que l'a bien montré F. Wisse, son ascétisme radical, qui éloigne le mouvement monastique, à ses débuts, de la communauté chrétienne dans son ensemble, le rapproche, justement, des divers courants encratiques plus ou moins gnostiques, à l'instar d'Hiéra-

cas et de ses disciples, qui pullulaient en Egypte au troisième siècle.<sup>39</sup>

Comme les courants encratiques gnostiques, et plus qu'eux, puisqu'il proposait aussi, à leur encontre, des structures communautaires assez rigides dans lesquelles devait s'intégrer la vie ascétique des "virtuoses" du désert, le Manichéisme a pu être, en Egypte, un catalyseur d'importance pour la formation du premier cénobitisme chrétien. A défaut d'une preuve irréfutable, il me semble que trop d'arguments militent en faveur d'une telle influence pour qu'on puisse en disposer facilement.

Les quelques traits tracés jusqu'ici restent cependant bien loin d'une description, même schématique, des rapports entre Christianisme et Manichéisme en Egypte. Qu'advint-il, en effet, des Manichéens, et en particulier de ces Elus vivant en communautés, après le triomphe du monachisme pachômien? Quand les Manichéens disparaissent-ils? Question corolaire: le succès du monachisme chrétien, et sa progressive identification au cours du quatrième siècle comme fer de lance de l'orthodoxie sont-ils en partie liés à l'élimination du Manichéisme comme facteur actif dans la vie religieuse en Egypte?

Contrairement à une opinion communément reçue, des traces nettes du Manichéisme sont encore décelables après la conquête arabe.<sup>40</sup> Quelque sceptique que l'on puisse être sur la véracité de ses dires quant il décrit l'Egypte comme à moitié manichéenne (et arienne) au cinquième siècle, Eutychius, qui écrit en arabe au dixième siècle, témoigne sans ambivalence de l'existence d'Elus et d'Auditeurs parmi les Manichéens d'Egypte à son époque.<sup>41</sup> Un autre témoignage net sur la survie relativement tardive de la religion de Lumière en Egypte est un sermon copte, attribué à Cyrille d'Alexandrie (sur lequel nous reviendrons par la suite) mais qu'il faut probablement dater du neuvième ou même du dixième siècle. Ce document, lui aussi, mentionne sans ambiguïté aucune la présence contemporaine de Manichéens en Egypte.<sup>42</sup>

C'est bien de *survie*, cependant, qu'il faut parler. En Egypte comme partout ailleurs dans l'Empire Romain (aussi bien que chez les Sassanides) c'est avec la plus grande rigueur que les Manichéens sont poursuivis.

W. Seston pensait cependant que c'est au monachisme, plutôt qu'à l'état, que revient le mérite d'avoir extirpé le Manichéisme d'Egypte, confinant ses communautés dans l'isolement, et tarissant leur recrutement.<sup>43</sup> Cette vue des choses est fort plausible, mais je voudrais ici insister sur un autre aspect de l'effacement progressif du Manichéisme de la carte religieuse de l'Egypte.

Les Manichéens, comme on l'a rappelé plus haut, ne se posent pas comme étrangers au Christianisme, mais bien plutôt comme possédant, seuls, le secret de sa vérité profonde.<sup>44</sup> Ainsi, s'ils sont poursuivis, aussi bien par le bras séculier que par les autorités ecclésiastiques, on peut imaginer sans difficulté qu'ils aient pu s'intégrer extérieurement à l'Eglise orthodoxe, tout en conservant en secret leurs croyances hérétiques. Ce phénomène de fausse conversion, qu'on peut appeler Marranisme par extension d'usage (voir aussi la *taqiyyā*, le mensonge permis ou même recommandé dans l'Islam shi'ite, face aux persécutions de la Sunna triomphante) est d'autant plus possible chez les Manichéens que, comme tous les Gnostiques, ils se vantaient du caractère ésotérique de leur doctrine, révélation de la Vérité dans un monde où règne le Mensonge, et où Dieu lui-même pour amorcer le processus de Rédemption, a besoin d'utiliser la ruse contre les forces du mal.<sup>45</sup>

Afin de survivre dans le royaume de l'Ombre, ces Fils de la Lumière se devaient de mentir, de se cacher, de garder leur foi secrète. Dans divers textes gnostiques, d'ailleurs, c'est le Messie lui-même qui apparaît incognito, se cachant des archontes et des puissances mauvaises. Tel est le cas dans l'*Apocalypse d'Adam* et *Zostrianos*, découverts à Nag Hammadi,<sup>46</sup> et, bien entendu, dans le *locus classicus* par excellence de la mythologie gnostique qu'est l'*Hymne de la Perle*,<sup>47</sup> text dont, on le sait, les Manichéens firent grand usage.

Dénonciations, règles contrôlant la sincérité de leur conversion, formules d'abjuration: tout dénote que la relation entre Manichéisme et Christianisme était une relation d'ordre interne, et tout laisse supposer que nombreux furent ceux qui, ayant extérieurement abjuré leur foi, continuèrent de la vivre secrètement, devenant des crypto-Manichéens. Nous savons par exemple qu'au cinquième siècle, nombreux étaient les Manichéens parmi le clergé arien en Afrique, et dont le roi Vandale Hunéric mit un grand nombre à mort.<sup>48</sup>

Augustin nous raconte qu'un certain Victorin, diacre de l'Eglise d'Afrique, était simple auditeur chez les Manichéens.<sup>49</sup> A Rome, sous le pontificat de Léon le Grand (vers la moitié du cinquième siècle), on détecte les Manichéens à leur refus de goûter au calice lors de l'Eucharistie.<sup>50</sup> C'est d'ailleurs sans doute pour lutter contre certains crypto-Manichéens que le Concile de Saragosse, en 380, stipula que ceux qui recevaient les éléments eucharistiques devaient les consommer.<sup>51</sup> Notons aussi que la tradition légendaire attribuait à Priscillien un maître Manichéen venu d'Egypte, Marc de Memphis.

Aussi stricte que l'interdiction manichéenne de boire du vin était celle de consommer de la viande. Voilà donc un autre expédient auquel on recourrut volontiers pour révéler les dualistes. Euthychius, dans sa *Chronique*, rapporte que Timothée, patriarche d'Alexandrie de 380 à 385, permit, ou plutôt ordonna aux évêques et aux moines de manger de la viande le dimanche, afin de reconnaître ainsi parmi le clergé et dans les monastères ceux qui conservaient en secret leur convictions manichéennes.<sup>52</sup> Il faut noter que ce même stratagème devait s'être révélé effectif, puisqu'on le voit utilisé contre les Zindiqs (c'est-à-dire les Manichéens) dans l'Islam, puis contre les Cathares en Provence médiévale.<sup>53</sup>

Qu'il y ait eu de nombreux hérétiques, et en particulier des Manichéens, parmi les moines d'Egypte, voilà ce que laisseraient aussi entendre certaines allusions dans la littérature monastique copte, et en particulier chez Shénouté.<sup>54</sup>

Je voudrais pour conclure présenter un *exemplum* fort intéressant qui nous a été conservé en copte, et qui, bien que publié et traduit depuis longtemps, ne semble pas avoir attiré l'attention. Il s'agit de la conversion d'une Manichéenne et de sa fille, racontée dans le sermon du Pseudo-Cyrille mentionné plus haut.<sup>55</sup> Cette Manichéenne envoyait sa fille à l'église, lui recommandant seulement de ne pas consommer l'hostie lorsqu'elle communiait, mais de la lui apporter. Puis elle la désacrait, la piquant d'une aiguille, et, voyant le sang en sortir, la déposait précieusement dans une cassette d'or. Un jour que la fillette, ayant joué en chemin avec d'autres enfants, arriva à l'église après la leçon biblique, tout juste pour la communion, la parcelle qu'elle rapporta à sa mère, percée, ne saigna

point. La Manichéenne roua tant sa fille de coups que le lendemain, le maître, à l'école, la questionna. La fillette avoua, et le didascale prévint l'archevêque. En criant déjà à la désacration (délivrait-elle les membres du Christ pour de l'argent?) on se précipita chez l'hérétique. Contrairement à ce que l'on craignait, les hosties furent trouvées dans la cassette, et la Manichéenne et sa fille, demandant pardon pour leurs fautes, abjurèrent leur hérésie. La tête rasée, elles allèrent s'enfermer dans un couvent d'Alexandrie, où elles finirent leurs jours dans la joie de la Vérité retrouvée.<sup>56</sup>

L'auteur enchaîne, et après ce miracle, en conte un autre, celui de la conversion d'un Juif, riche et craignant-Dieu véritable, pilier de la synagogue d'Alexandrie.<sup>57</sup> Cette deuxième histoire ne nous touche pas directement ici; elle est cependant significative, car le parallélisme frappant — qu'une analyse littéraire structurale se devrait de relever — et aussi les différences essentielles, entre les deux *exempla* sont fort révélateurs de la place respective que tenaient Manichéens et Juifs dans la conscience copte.

La différence est claire: les Manichéens sont des hérétiques, *de l'intérieur*, donc, et ce n'est que par hasard que leur existence secrète est révélée. Les Juifs, eux, aussi antipathiques qu'ils soient, voient leur existence reconnue sans ambiguïté aucune (le texte mentionne "la rue des Juifs", la "Judengasse"): ils sont à situer *en dehors* des limites de la communauté chrétienne; la Manichéenne se repente, les Juifs se convertissent.

Quelles conclusions tirer de ces réflexions sur les rapports entre Manichéisme et Christianisme en Egypte? D'abord, qu'à défaut de nouvelles découvertes, la pauvreté de sources est telle qu'elle rend pratiquement impossible le dessin d'une image, même imprécise, de ces rapports. Dans de telles conditions, on doit se contenter d'hypothèses, de descriptions phénoménologiques, qui, au mieux, ne peuvent apparaître que plausibles.

Plausibles, il me semble, sont les deux aspects de cette survie du Manichéisme en Egypte sur lesquels j'ai insisté ici. D'abord, le caractère souterrain, ou marrane, de cette survie, plus longue qu'on ne la croit habituellement. Le rôle important, aussi, que semble avoir joué dans cette occultation du Manichéisme le mouvement monastique du quatrième siècle. Il faut espérer que des

recherches futures s'efforceront de préciser ce rôle. Il n'est en tout cas pas à exclure que le succès avec lequel les moines réussirent à éliminer l'hérésie dualiste comme le plus grand danger auquel ait fait face l'Eglise ne soit pas sans rapport avec la rapide sanctification de leur mouvement, qui à ses débuts était loin d'emporter l'enthousiasme, ou même l'adhésion, des évêques.

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<sup>1</sup> *Vita Antonii*, ch. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 14.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 68.

<sup>4</sup> Voir en particulier les remarques de R.P. Casey, dans l'introduction à son édition: *Serapion of Thmuis: "against the Manichaeans"* (Harvard Theological Studies, 15; Cambridge, 1931), 17sv.

<sup>5</sup> Alexander Lycopolitanus, *Contra Manichaei opinioneis disputatio*, A. Brinkmann, ed. (Leipzig, 1895), ch. 1-2, pp. 3-4. Voir la traduction annotée de P. W. van der Horst et J. Mansfeld, *An Alexandrian Platonist against Dualism* (Leiden, 1974), 48-52.

<sup>6</sup> Voir les textes réunis et discutés par L. Koenen, "Augustine and Manichaeism in Light of the Cologne Mani Codex", *Illinois Classical Studies*, 3 (1978), 154-195, particulièrement 167-176.

<sup>7</sup> Le fait que certains fragments manichéens syriaques aient été découverts parmi les textes coptes est souligné par P. Brown, "The Diffusion of Manichaeism in the Roman Empire", *Journal of Roman Studies* 59 (1969), 92-103, réimprimé dans P. Brown, *Religion and Society in the Age of Saint Augustine* (Londres, 1972), 94-118; voir 104.

<sup>8</sup> Fragment Moyen-Iranien M2 r. I, 11. 1 sv., édité par F. C. Andreas et W. Henning, *Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisch Turkestan*, II, SPAW 1933, 301-302, réimprimé dans Henning, *Selected Papers*, I (Acta Iranica 14; Leiden-Téhéran, 1977), 198-199.

D'après ce texte extrêmement important, Adda, envoyé par Mani pour diriger la mission manichéenne en Egypte — il atteint Alexandrie — "fonda plusieurs monastères, choisit de nombreux élus et auditeurs... maîtrisa et enchaîna les 'dogmes' (c'est-à-dire les autres religions)". Le fragment conclut "La religion de l'apôtre fut avancée dans l'Empire Romain". Le témoignage de ce fragment est maintenant à compléter par certains des textes édités par W. Sundermann, *Mitteliranische Texte kirchengeschichtlichen Inhalts* (Schriften zur Geschichte und Kultur des alten Orients, Berliner Turfantexte 11; Berlin, 1981).

<sup>9</sup> Il appelle ainsi ces derniers *semichristiani*, par contraste avec les Manichéens, *veri christiani*, dès la première page du *Contra Faustum* d'Augustin (I. 2-3, 250-251 Zycha). Voir les nombreux parallèles ausquels renvoie Koenen, "Augustine and Manichaeism", 163 et nn. 31, 33.

<sup>10</sup> "Manichees and Christians in the third and early fourth centuries", *Ex Orbe Religionum, Studia G. Widengren... oblata I* (Suppl. to *Numen* 21; Leiden, 1972), 438.

<sup>11</sup> *Acta Archelai* 62 (90-91 Beeson), et Epiphanius, *Panarion* 66.2 (C. Riggi, *Epifanio contro Mani* [Rome, 1967], 10). L'importance possible de ce témoignage sur

l'implantation du Manichéisme en Egypte par la Thébaïde avait déjà été relevée par C. Schmidt et H. J. Polotsky, *Ein Mani-Fund in Ägypten*, SPAW, 1933, 12 sv.

<sup>12</sup> Voir en particulier F. Wisse, “Gnosticism and Early Monasticism in Egypt”, dans B. Aland, ed., *Gnosis, Festschrift für Hans Jonas* (Göttingen, 1978), 431-440. L'existence probable de certains liens entre les mouvements gnostique et monastique ne doit pas faire oublier les profondes différences phénoménologiques qui les séparent; voir G. Stroumsa, “Ascèse et Gnose: Aux origines de la spiritualité monastique”, *Revue Thomiste*, 81 (1981), 557-573; pour les relations possibles entre monachisme et Manichéisme, voir n. 8, p. 558.

<sup>13</sup> Ainsi que le fait, sans justification, William Seston, dans “L'Egypte manichéenne”, *Chronique d'Egypte*, 14 (1939), 365. Cf. déjà la critique de J.A.L. Vergote, dans son excellent “Der Manichäismus in Ägypten”, in G. Widengren, ed., *Der Manichäismus* (Wege der Forschung, 168; Darmstadt, 1977), 387, n. 6. Il s'agit de la traduction d'un article publié originellement en néerlandais: “Het Manichaeisme in Egypte”, *Jaarbericht van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap “Ex Oriente Lux”*, 9 (1944), 77-83. Sundermann, *Mir. man. Texte kirch. Inhalts*, 39, n. 9, suggère que le Thomas des *Acta Archelai* est une réminiscence de Mār Addā, et que l'Addas des *Acta* reflète le Mār Ammō des textes iraniens.

<sup>14</sup> Sur les dates de la mission manichéenne en Egypte, voir Sundermann, *op. cit.*, introduction au fragment z.5, pp. 25-26.

<sup>15</sup> Voir déjà Bang, “Manichäische Hymnen”, *Le Muséon* 38 (1925), 30-31 (cité par Henning, *Mir. Man. II*, dans ses *Selected Papers*, I, 223, n. 5); de même, Widengren, *Mani and Manichaeism* (London, 1965), 34.

<sup>16</sup> Koenen remarque que, comme à Qumrān, et de façon similaire à la laure monastique, il ne semble pas que les Elus aient résidé dans le *mānistān*, mais dormaient, plutôt, aux alentours.

<sup>17</sup> Dans son article cité n. 13 *supra*. Le “monastère” (*μοναστήριον*) n'indique d'ailleurs pas nécessairement, dans la littérature chrétienne ancienne, un bâtiment cénobitique (cf. D. Chitti, *The Desert a City* [London, 1966], 5, qui se réfère à *Vita Antonii*, ch. 14 [P.G. 26, col. 865 A B]).

<sup>18</sup> Voir les remarques pertinentes de Guillaumont, “Perspectives actuelles sur les origines du monachisme”, dans ses *Aux origines du monachisme chrétien: pour une phénoménologie du monachisme* (Spiritualité orientale, 30; Abbaye de Bellesfontaine, Bézergues en Mauges, 1979), 215 sv. Beaucoup a été écrit sur Qumrān et le monachisme chrétien; voir par exemple J. van der Ploeg, “Les Esséniens et les origines du monachisme chrétien”, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, 153 (1958), 321-339; cf. J. Coppens, “Le célibat essénien”, dans M. Delcor, ed., *Qumrān: sa piété, sa théologie et son milieu* (Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum Lovaniensium, 46; Paris-Gembloux, 1978), 295-303. Sur les Thérapeutes, voir dans l'introduction de F. Daumas au *De Vita Contemplativa* de Philon (Oeuvres de Philon, 29; Paris, 1963): “Les Thérapeutes et l'origine du monachisme”, 58-66. Les tentatives pour expliquer la genèse du monachisme égyptien à partir des *katochoi*, ascétiques s'emmurant dans le temple de Serapis à Memphis (voir par exemple H. Lietzmann, *A History of the Early Church*, IV [London, 1953], 132) ne semblent pas avoir porté fruit. Voir l'article de Vergote cité *infra*, n. 19, 336.

<sup>19</sup> Voir J. Vergote, “L'Egypte, berceau du monachisme chrétien”, *Chronique d'Egypte*, 17 (1942), 329-345, en particulier 331-332, ainsi que Chitty, *The Desert a City*, 7 qui se réfère à Rostovtzev, *Social and econ. hist.*, 578-579 (n. 50 à p. 274) et 599 (n. 15 à p. 357). Le phénomène est attesté par des papyri publiés plus récemment, voir H. Braunert, *Die Binnenwanderung: Studien zur Sozialgeschichte Ägyptens in*

der Ptolemäer- und Kaiserzeit (Bonner hist. Forsch. 26; Bonn, 1964), 165-167 et 328-333.

<sup>20</sup> Voir Puech, *Sur le Manichéisme et autres essais* (Paris, 1979), 254-255.

<sup>21</sup> La plus récente étude est celle de S. N. C. Lieu, "Precept and Practice in Manichaean Monasticism", *Journal of Theol. Studies*, 32 (1981), 153-173. Voir aussi P. Zieme, "Ein uigurischer Text über die Wirtschaft manichäischen Klöster im uigurischen Reich", dans L. Ligeti, ed., *Researches in Altaic Languages* (Bibliotheca Orientalis Hungarica, 20; Budapest, 1975), 331-338. Zieme présente une première analyse d'un text décrivant l'organisation d'un monastère. Le Dr. Marcel Erdal me signale une publication chinoise récente: Kêng-Shih-min, "Notes on an Uighur Government Charter issued to a Manichaean Monastery", *Kao-gu xue bao*, 4 (1978), 497-516.

<sup>22</sup> Ce rescript est adressé d'Alexandrie le 31 mars, mais l'année n'est pas précisée. Sur les arguments invoqués en faveur de diverses hypothèses chronologiques, voir H. Chadwick, "The Relativity of Moral Codes: Rome and Persia in Late Antiquity", dans W. R. Schoedel et R. L. Wilken, eds., *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition, in honorem R. M. Grant* (Théologie Historique, 53; Paris, 1979), 135-153, en particulier 135-139 et n. 17, p. 138.

<sup>23</sup> Voir E.-H. Kaden, "Die Edikte gegen die Manichäer von Diokletian bis Justinian", dans *Festschrift für Hans Lewald* (Basel, 1953), 55-68.

<sup>24</sup> *Codex Theodosianus* 16.5 (de Haereticis 7.9; cf. 16.7 (de Apostatis) 3., qui mentionne les "retraites" et la "séclusion" des Manichéens (Padoue, 383).

<sup>25</sup> *Codex Theodosianus* 16.5 7.18. Cf. *Novelles de Valentinien III*, 18. (de Manichaeis) 3: les Manichéens sont expulsés des cités (Rome, 445).

<sup>26</sup> Voir par exemple A. Henrichs, "Mani and the Babylonian Baptists: a Historical Confrontation", *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 77 (1973), 23-59.

<sup>27</sup> Sur divers sens de ce vocable, voir J. B. Segal, "Aramaic Texts from Hatra (Ibr. I-XXI): Notes on an Aramaean Arab principality", Communication au Colloque International "From Jähiliyya to Islam", Université Hébraïque — Institut des Etudes Avancées (29 juin-6 juillet 1982), à paraître, avec les Actes du Colloque, dans *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*.

<sup>28</sup> En attendant la publication de ses nouvelles recherches, voir son commentaire sur *CMC* 89, 8-9, dans *Zeitsch. Papyr. Epigr.*, 32 (1978), n. 242, pp. 166-169.

<sup>29</sup> Mani effectua ce voyage vers la fin du règne d'Ardashir, et revint en Iran après sa mort et le couronnement de son fils Shahpur; voir *Kephalaia* 15, 24-31. Le voyage a donc été d'assez courte durée, de 240-241 à 242-243. Cf. Puech, *Le Manichéisme, son fondateur, sa doctrine* (Paris, 1949), 44 et n. 167 et les témoignages nouveaux rapportés par Henrichs et Koenen, *Zeitsch. Papyr. Epigr.* 48 (1982), 3-5, particulièrement 4, n. 11. Sur le monachisme bouddhiste, voir A. S. Geden, "Monasticism (Buddhist)", *Encycl. Rel. Ethics*, 8, 797-802; E. Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien* (Louvain, 1958), 58-94; S. Dutt, *Early Buddhist Monachism* (London, 1960).

<sup>30</sup> Fragment M 48v, discuté par Henning, "Neue Materielen zur Geschichte des Manichäismus", *Selected Papers*, I, 385. Cf. Puech, *Le Manichéisme*, 45 et n. 175.

<sup>31</sup> Voir par exemple *Kephalaia* 12, *passim*. Sur l'idée d'apostolat dans le Manichéisme, voir ma contribution au Colloque de Jérusalem (cf. n. 26 *supra*), "Seal of the Prophets': the Nature of a Manichaean Metaphor".

<sup>32</sup> Cf. J. Ries, *Introduction aux études manichéennes*, II (Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses, 35; 1959), 365-372.

<sup>33</sup> Ce fait est souligné par Widengren, *Mani*, 95.

<sup>34</sup> Le dualisme sociologique à l'intérieur de la communauté religieuse est ainsi beaucoup plus marqué que dans certains milieux du Christianisme syriaque — reflétés dans le *Liber Graduum* — qui maintenaient deux niveaux de fidèles, les *justes* et les *parfaits*.

<sup>35</sup> *Sur le Manichéisme*, 312-313. Voir, plus précisément, H.-J. Klimheit, “Manichäische und buddhistische Beichtformeln aus Turfan: Beobachtungen zur Beziehung zwischen Gnosis und Mahāyāna”, *Zeitsch. Rel. Geist-Gesch.*, 29 (1977), 193-228.

<sup>36</sup> Papyrus Rylands 469, “Epistle against the Manichees”, dans C. H. Roberts, *Catalogue of the Greek and Latin Papyri in the John Rylands Library at Manchester*, III (Manchester, 1938), 38-46.

<sup>37</sup> Dans une lettre citée par Vergote, “L’Egypte, berceau du monachisme chrétien”, 338: *Apud hos affectata sunt omnia..., laxae manicae, caligae follicantes, vestis grossia, crebra suspiria, visitatio virginum, osbrectatio clericorum; et si quando festior dies venerit, saturantur ad vomitum.*” T. Säve-Söderberg, “Holy Scriptures or Apostolic Documentation? The *Sitz im Leben* of the Nag Hammadi Library” dans J.-É. Ménard, ed., *Les Textes de Nag-Hammadi* (Nag Hammadi Studies 7; Leiden: 1975), 7, fait allusion à un passage de la *Vita Pachomii*, que je n’ai pu retrouver, selon lequel l’évêque de Phnoum, en basse Egypte, se serait opposé à l’établissement d’un monastère dans les limites des son évêché.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. C. Pharr, *The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions* (Princeton, 1952), 449, n. 2.

<sup>39</sup> Wisse, “Gnosticism and Early Monasticism in Egypt”, 431-440.

<sup>40</sup> “... en 641, à l’arrivée des Arabes, il n’est plus question de Manichéens en Egypte”, écrit W. Seston, “L’Egypte manichéenne”, *Chronique d’Egypte*, 14 (1939), 372.

<sup>41</sup> Les *Annales d’Eutychius*, patriarche d’Alexandrie, ont été éditées par L. Cheiko (Paris, 1906-1909); *non vidi*. Je cite la traduction latine de E. Pococke, réimprimée dans *P.G.* 111, 889 sv.; le texte qui nous intéresse est aux cols. 1015 B et 1023 B-1024. Ce texte est déjà utilisé par E. de Stoop, *Essai sur la diffusion du Manichéisme dans l’Empire Romain* (Université de Gand, Recueils et Travaux, 38; Gand, 1909), 74-75.

<sup>42</sup> Ce “Sermon sur la Pénitence” est édité et traduit par M. Chaîne, S.J., dans les *Mélanges de la Faculté Orientale de l’Université Saint Joseph*, 6 (1913), 493-519. Pour la datation du manuscrit et du texte, voir p. 495. Ce texte ne semble pas avoir été utilisé par les historiens du Manichéisme égyptien.

<sup>43</sup> Seston, *art. cit.*, 370-371.

<sup>44</sup> Voir n. 9 *supra*.

<sup>45</sup> Voir Stroumsa, “The King and the Swine: on the Structure of Manichaean Dualism”, à paraître dans les *Actes du Colloque Gnosis und Politik*, Bad Homburg, 20-24 Septembre 1982.

<sup>46</sup> *NHC* V, 5; 77, 12-15; et VIII, 1; 130, 10-13.

<sup>47</sup> Voir en particulier versets 29-30. Sur l’hymne de la Perle, voir maintenant l’édition de P.-H. Poirier, *L’Hymne de la Perle des Actes de Thomas* (Homo Religiosus, 8; Louvain, 1981). Pour un parallèle phénoménologique saisissant, cf. l’affirmation d’Abraham Cardozo, théologien sabbatéen d’origine marrane du dix-septième siècle, selon laquelle le Messie devait, lui aussi, devenir marrane; cité par G. Scholem, “Redemption through Sin”, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York, 1971), 95.

<sup>48</sup> Voir A. Fliche et V. Martin, *Histoire de l’Eglise*, IV: *De la mort de Théodose à l’élection de Grégoire le Grand* (Paris, 1945), 67. Cf., p. 66 et n. 6 la liste chronologique

des édits impériaux contre les Manichéens, seuls hérétiques que les empereurs chrétiens aient punis de la peine capitale. Leur crime est qualifié par Honorius de *publicum crimen* (*Codex Theodos.* 16.5.40). Cf. Basile, 2<sup>e</sup> *Hom. Hexahemeron*, 4, qui appelle les Manichéens “pourriture des églises”. Sur les rapports entre Arianisme et Manichéisme, voir F. J. Dölger, “Konstantin der Grosse und der Manichäismus. Sonne und Christus im Manichäismus”, *Antike und Christentum: Kultur und religionsgeschichtliche Studien*, II (1933; reprinted Münster, 1974), 306.

<sup>49</sup> Je cite d’après de Stoop, *Essai sur la diffusion du Manichéisme*, 75, qui se réfère à Augustin, *Epist.*, p. 236, mais sans indiquer l’édition.

<sup>50</sup> Léon, *Sermo* 42.5 (*P.L.* 54, 280 A), cité par H. Chadwick, *Priscillian of Avila: the occult and the charismatic in the early Church* (Oxford, 1976), 23. Cf. Léon, *Sermo* 16.4 et *Epist.* 15.16, cités par Fliche-Martin, *op. cit.*, 67.

<sup>51</sup> Chadwick, *op. cit.*, 22-23. Je remercie le professeur Chadwick d’avoir attiré mon attention sur ce fait.

<sup>52</sup> Texte cité n. 40, *supra*, cf. de Stoop, *op. cit.*, 75. Voir la discussion de ce texte par H. H. Schaeder, dans sa recension de Schmidt-Polotsky, *Mani-Fund, Gnomon* 9 (1933), 341-342.

<sup>53</sup> Voir G. Vajda, “Les zindiqs en pays d’Islam au début de la période abbaside”, *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 17 (1938), 185 et n. 3. Cf. le témoignage du théologien mu’tazilite ‘Abd al-Jabbār (11<sup>e</sup> s.), dans son *Tathbīt dalā'il al-nubuwā*: “(Les Manichéens) disent: nous n’avons pourtant pas chez les musulmans de protection légale (*dhimma*) comme en ont juifs, chrétiens et mages. Aussi, quand nous manifestons notre religion, il nous tuent. Et les empereurs de Byzance font de même”. Texte traduit par G. Monnot, “Quelques textes de ‘Abd al-Jabbār sur le Manichéisme”, *RHR* 183 (1973), 8.

<sup>54</sup> Voir les textes relevés par W. E. Crum dans sa recension de Schmidt-Polotsky, *Mani-Fund, Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 29 (1933), 197-199. On peut ajouter à ces textes le “Sermon de Benjamin sur les Noces de Cana”, qui mentionne l’histoire de deux prêtres étrangers” Manichéens, “faisant marchandise du Corps de notre Seigneur” (voir l’*exemplum* rapporté plus bas), et finalement brûlés vifs dans un chaudron par Shénouté. Je remercie le Dr. A. Shisha-Halévi d’avoir attiré mon attention sur ce texte, ainsi que sur d’autres références au Manichéisme dans divers manuscrits coptes; ce texte est édité et traduit par H. de Vries, *Homélies Coptes de la Vaticane*, I (Houniae, 1922), 80-88.

<sup>55</sup> Voir n. 42 *supra*. Le texte figure aux pp. 498-508.

<sup>56</sup> A ma connaissance, la description de la désacration de l’hostie que nous conservé le sermon du pseudo-Cyrille est la plus ancienne que nous ayons. Les cas connus — où ce sont toujours des Juifs qui sont accusés de la désacration — sont tous d’origine européenne (le “miracle de Beyrouth” est nettement différent) et ne remontent pas plus haut que la mi-treizième siècle. Le dogme de la transsubstantiation avait été adopté par le 4<sup>e</sup> concile du Latéran, en 1215, et de nombreux chercheurs supposaient que l’accusation de désacration ne pouvait être apparue qu’après la formulation du dogme; cette supposition s’avère donc intenable. Sur la désacration de l’hostie, voir “Host, desacration of”, *Encyclopedie Judaica*, VIII, col. 1040 sv.

<sup>57</sup> Chaîne, “Sermon sur la Pénitence”, 509-519.

## “*LINĀGA*” AS LORD SUPREME IN THE *VACANA*-S OF BASAVA

R. BLAKE MICHAEL

Among his earliest memories, dreams, and reflections, C. G. Jung relates a fascinating dream from his fourth year. Playing in a beautiful meadow, he discovered a dark, stone-lined hole and a set of stairs leading down into the earth. Descending the stairs and pushing aside a green brocade curtain, he peered curiously through an archway into a dimly lit vaulted chamber. On a raised platform in the center, stood a magnificent golden throne covered by red cushioning, surrounded by red carpeting, and supporting upright a massive column. Though the column resembled a tree trunk, it was composed of flesh and had as its capital a rounded head, faceless and hairless, marked only by a single unmoving eye which cast a bright aura upward. Terrified that the object might come down from its throne, and, wormlike, creep over to devour him, the young dreamer was not in the least comforted when he heard his mother’s voice calling from outside the chamber, “Yes, just look at him. That is the man-eater!”

Much later, reflecting on this haunting childhood dream, Jung recognized the hole as a symbol of the grave and death, the meadow and the green curtain as the verdant and fertile earth, the red carpeting and cushioning as blood, the crowning aura as the shining root of phallic imagery (Gk. φαλός: shining, bright), and the column as an anatomically correct and obviously erect male genital organ. For his own reflections upon matters psychological as well as matters theological, that dream phallus became and remained a symbol of the “God ‘not to be named’ ” whose terrifying aspect at least equalled his benign face.<sup>1</sup>

Both the narrative structure and many of the symbols of Jung’s dream had found archetypical expression centuries earlier in the great fifteenth-century *Viraśaiva* dialectical text, the *Śūnyasam-pādane*. That text narrates the wanderings of the great saint Allama Prabhu, his own spiritual progress, and his encounters with other

spiritual seekers. In one such encounter, having met and instructed the farmer Goggayya, Allama continued wandering about in Goggayya's fields. There he came upon the entrance to a concealed chamber. Entering and looking about, Allama detected the glow of a single flame bathing the visage of an accomplished *yogin*, who sat meditating in the full-lotus position, unmoving and unblinking, Animiṣa. On Animiṣa's palm was a small stone symbol which he contemplated with perfect concentration and composure. Enraptured by the aspect of this perfected master and obsessed with the need for a similar accomplishment on his own part, Allama besought Animiṣa to instruct and initiate him. When the latter remained unresponsive, Allama recognized the spiritual identity of himself and his idol and promptly initiated himself by seizing the symbol from Animiṣa's palm. His joy at that somewhat irregular initiation was interrupted by the immediate demise of Animiṣa whose corporeal form disintegrated as he became merged with the formless void.<sup>2</sup>

Certain similarities between these two events cannot escape note. The wandering about in verdant fields, the descent into the caverns of the earth, the glow from the solitary lights, the encounters with the rigid and erect column and unmoving *yogin*, the threatened violence by the “man-eater” upon the boy, and the disintegrative impatience of the novice toward his new-found master—all these elements readily suggest psycho-sexual interpretations of fertility, the mother's womb, the blinding emission, the erect phallus, the castrating female, and the impatient young parricide.

This impetus toward a psycho-sexual interpretation of these materials—especially of the Vīraśaiva tale—is at first strengthened by a rudimentary knowledge of Vīraśaiva belief and practice in which the object of contemplation held in the palm is a small stone called “*liṅga*”. In Kannada, the colloquial language of Vīraśaiva poetry, as in Sanskrit, the word “*liṅga*” often refers to the penis or, more specifically, to the phallus of Lord Śiva.

Western reactions to the phallic connotations of the term “*liṅga*” have been two-fold. The nineteenth-century Christian missionaries and European civil servants who served in India were quick to express their surprise, disgust, and horror at the *liṅga* cult in general and at the Vīraśaiva-s' emphasis on the *liṅga* in particular. They

saw nothing but crude vulgarity in what was, to their eyes, the licentious celebration of fertility and promiscuous sexuality.<sup>3</sup>

More recently, psychologists of religion and others influenced by psycho-sexual theory have viewed the veneration of *liṅga* in a less negative light. Perceiving that there are common psycho-sexual forces behind the religious expressions of various cultures and that the symbolic connotations of the *liṅga* extend beyond mere anatomy, they have often evaluated the *liṅga* cult more positively. In fact, they have frequently displayed a genuine appreciation for the creativity of symbolic expression and for the depth of psychological insight evidenced by the veneration of *liṅga*.<sup>4</sup>

Significantly, the word “*liṅga*” itself has two sets of meanings which correspond to both the literalist missionaries’ horror and the symbolic psychologists’ delight at the object’s veneration. In Kannada, as in Sanskrit, the word means both (1) “the penis, Śiva’s genital organ, the phallus,” and (2) “a mark, a sign, a token, an emblem.”<sup>5</sup> The matter of priority between these two sets of meanings has generated debate and research which, unfortunately, ends in a seemingly insoluble etymological puzzle.<sup>6</sup> For present purposes, the attempt to unravel this etymological tangle can be avoided. What is of importance here is that the dual connotations of the word, derived from whatever root(s) it may be, must be noted.

Even if the term’s primary reference is to the male organ of procreation, the dual nature of the word’s meanings requires that it must refer not only to the anatomical organ itself but also to what is symbolized by that organ. The term must, at the very least, carry meanings of creative capacity in active exertion. In other words, it must refer to the phallus as a functioning organ and not simply to the penis as an anatomical object.

Probably, this assertion, though it may have been problematic for Victorian missionaries, poses little problem for the sophisticated modern reader. It is worthy of note, however, that even this understanding of the meaning of “*liṅga*” in its symbolic functional sense rather than in its literal anatomical sense fails to do justice to the connotations which Vīraśaiva-s themselves derive from the term.

They are likely, as does Swami Shri Kumar, for example, to refer to “*liṅga*” as symbolic of the “the presence of God, not in the far off

heavens but in the very cells of the human body”; or as “the image of Infinity”; or as “the self-existent truth”.<sup>7</sup> Another contemporary Vīraśaiva, S. C. Nandimath, points out a traditional interpretation of *liṅga* as “the Brahman from which all beings are born, by which those that are born live, and in which they enter after death; therefore it is the cause of absorption and production.” He points to an etymology of the word, perhaps fanciful from a linguistic perspective but all too potent from a religious one, in which the word derives from the two roots *√li*, meaning “to absorb”, and *√gam*, meaning “to go out, to issue forth”.<sup>8</sup> Hence, for him as for other Vīraśaiva-s, “*liṅga*”—emission and absorption joined together—is the unifying entity in the universal process of becoming and passing away. *Liṅga* is then, in some sense, the reality behind that process.

Elsewhere, M. R. Sakhare has explained the *liṅga* differently, but in a way which similarly reflects a divine and cosmic sense behind the term and the symbol. He has noted that the *liṅga* representation most commonly found in Śaiva temples as well as the type worn about the body by Vīraśaiva-s do not accurately represent a penis anyway. They are rather, as he sees them, stone cylindrical columns topped by hemispherical domes. The hemispherical dome he sees as the dome of heaven above reaching to the horizon. The symbol as a whole represents the basic nature of the universe and does so with the highest degree of abstraction, formalism, and non-anthropomorphism possible. Hence the *liṅga* symbolizes the very nature of the cosmic order in which humans live. The *liṅga* is the fundamental basis, the essential nature, the metaphysical principle, of the cosmos. It is the *parabrahman*.<sup>9</sup>

It is this last assertion which seems to pose the most difficulty for those who earnestly attempt to understand the nature of Vīraśaiva religious experience. It is easy enough, in the present century at least, to comprehend that the *liṅga* points to something other than mere anatomy. It is easy enough to accept that *liṅga* is a sign of all that is entailed in the notion of masculine creative and procreative capacity. It is less easy, however, to understand that the *liṅga* can be a sign of some ultimate cosmic reality. More difficult still is the final Vīraśaiva claim that not only is *liṅga* a symbol for the cosmic ultimate, but also it, in some sense, IS the cosmic ultimate. “Not

only is *liṅga* a symbol for the Lord," say the Vīraśaiva-s, "but also and most basically *liṅga* IS Lord!"

The difficulty of grasping this point is likely to arise when reading works such as Swami Lingananda's *Emblem of God* where he attempts to distinguish between *liṅga* as the Absolute Lord and *iṣṭaliṅga* as the small concrete symbol which serves as the object of veneration for Vīraśaiva-s. Particularly difficult to grasp is his assertion that

Liṅga is the highest Thing, the Absolute, the Paraśiva, the universal Soul, the Supernal light; Liṅga is the Energy, the immaculate, impartite, formless, peerless Principle without attributes. Liṅga is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.<sup>10</sup>

Unfortunately, such descriptions by modern Vīraśaiva-s tend to engender the nagging suspicion that all this cosmological talk is but the product of recent apologia. The impression lingers that these are but the words of some modern apologist, stung by Western charges of idolatry, who is attempting to answer those charges by making an artificial distinction in the tradition's use of language and attributing meanings to the term which previous generations of believers had not intended. The persistent retort to such apparently artificial apologetics seems to be, "Yes, yes, I know the *liṅga* symbolizes the transcendent and all that, but isn't it REALLY and BASICALLY just a symbol and a phallic one at that?"

The suspicion that these interpretations of the *liṅga* as the Supreme Absolute are but recent apology proves misplaced however, when careful attention is turned to the *vacana*-s (a sort of devotional prose poem) of Basava, the reputed twelfth-century founder of the movement.

Born to an orthodox Brahmin family of Bāgēvāḍi in approximately C.E. 1105, Basava grew up with a strong dose of traditional Brahmanical values and staid orthodox religiosity. On the occasion of his investiture with the Brahmanical sacred thread, however, the twelve-year-old surprised his family and community by refusing to complete the ceremony. Arguing that true religiosity was to be found in personal and internal piety, he rejected all the forms of religious formalism which his parents' tradition promoted. Fleeing his parents home, Basava went to Kappaḍi Kūḍala Saṅgama where he entered into intense meditation at the temple of Lord Śiva

located at that sacred confluence of the Kṛṣṇā and Malaprabhā rivers. Eventually his efforts were rewarded by an intense personal experience of Śiva’s presence within himself and thenceforward he symbolized that presence by wearing on his person not the Brahmanical sacred thread but a small *liṅga* (the *iṣṭaliṅga* of later Liṅgāyata practice).

Basava’s political fortunes began to rise after he married Gaṅgāmbike, the daughter of Baladēva who was prime minister at the Kālachurya court in Kalyāṇa, seat of government for Bijjala, the usurper of Chālukyan authority. Himself offered a prominent position at the court, Basava and his family moved to Kālāṇa, but he did not abandon his intense Śaiva piety. Rather he used his position at court to organize and protect the growing band of ardent Śaiva-s who shared his intense pietism and who venerated not only his leadership but also the Kannada prose poems, or *vacana*-s which he composed.<sup>11</sup>

If any single body of literature provides insight into the traditional Vīraśaiva understanding of *liṅga*, it must be these *vacana*-s; and already here in these twelfth-century sayings is found a cosmic and transcendent meaning for the term “*liṅga*”. Upon investigation of these sayings it becomes obvious that *liṅga* not only symbolized the Supreme Absolute but also, in many ways, WAS that Absolute within the fideistic vision of traditional Vīraśaiva-s. This claim acquires validity from a careful scrutiny and classification of Basava’s uses of the term “*liṅga*” in his *vacana*-s.

First, it must be admitted that there are *vacana*-s in which, at least in most translations, Basava seems to refer to worship of the *liṅga* and to specify that the worship should be daily, dawn performance of prostrations, *ārati*, and even song and dance.

Of what use is life for one  
 Who does not get up at dawn  
 And gaze intently on  
 Śiva’s *liṅga*?  
 What good can his life be  
 For a walking zombie  
 A living corpse? ...  
 O Lord of the Meeting Rivers. ...

—Basava<sup>12</sup>

Basava then does not seem to reject all forms of ritual whatsoever. His rejection of the Brahmanical sacred thread is simply rejection of cold, lifeless, and empty ritual formalism. On the other hand, ritual based on active and lively spiritual awareness is to be performed as a great aid in Śaiva piety. In fact, Basava occasionally goes so far as to specify what substances (water, *bilva* leaves, etc.) should be used in making offerings during the course of worshipping the *liṅga*.<sup>13</sup>

Basava also insists that the duty of each faithful Vīraśaiva is to be always and continually in contact with *liṅga*. For example, he praises the transforming nature of contact with *liṅga*.

Touched by the lodestone  
 Iron becomes gold.  
 Touched by the *liṅga*  
 Sins depart the soul.  
 O Lord of the Meeting Rivers.

—Basava<sup>14</sup>

At one level this insistence on *liṅga*'s power might seem to indicate that Basava held to a highly ritualistic and almost magical view of the sacred power of inanimate objects. It might seem to indicate that Basava not so much rejected ritual formalism as substituted a new symbol—the *liṅga*—for the older one—the sacred thread.

This claim is erroneous, however; for carefully analyzed and properly understood, the *vacana* clearly shows that Basava's concern for constant contact with the *liṅga* means not only, and not even primarily, contact with the stone *liṅga* emblem. Touch with the *liṅga* is rather an utterly transforming contact with an object which is not mere stone just as the lodestone is not mere stone. Elsewhere, this contact is described as union with a transcendent reality (*bhāvaliṅga*) or with an inner and enduring presence in the heart (*prāṇaliṅga*).<sup>15</sup> In other words, contact with *liṅga* means a continual and abiding contact with something other than a mere stone object.

Basava proceeds to describe two aspects of *liṅga* as it is available to human experience and understanding. In the first place, whatever *liṅga* may finally be said to be, it is not solely an inanimate abstraction; rather it is a source of comfort and aid—an active dispenser of salvific grace.

They talk of the three-fold Grace; what is what?  
 Pure is the *liṅga*'s grace;

Perfect is the *jaṅgama*’s;  
 And well-known is the *guru*’s.  
 Show me those for whom these three are one,  
 O Lord of the Meeting Rivers.

—Basava<sup>16</sup>

The *jaṅgama* and the *guru* are two types of personal spiritual leaders within Vīraśaivism. That *liṅga* is included with these two living, breathing dispensers of grace seems to indicate that *liṅga* too is an active provider of salvific grace. For Basava then *liṅga* would appear to be not, or not simply, an inanimate amulet but, or but also, an active agent for the spiritual perfection of the worshipper.

Secondly, besides being actively participant in the soteriological process, *liṅga* is, sometimes, a personalized and personified agent. Rather than being merely an inactive object, it is an agent of salvation which is perceived in a wholly personal way and which should not simply be indicated as “it” but also as “He” or “She”.<sup>17</sup> For example, *liṅga*, is described as a tireless worker toiling for the salvation of human beings.

Measuring and measuring, one may grow tired,  
 But does the yardstick grow tired?  
 Walking and walking, one may grow weary,  
 But does the roadway grow weary?  
 Drilling and drilling, one may give out,  
 But does the drill bit give out?  
 The devotee ignorant of the Truth grows tired,  
 But does *liṅga* grow tired?  
*Liṅga*’s work is without wages.  
 O Lord of the Meeting Rivers.

—Basava<sup>18</sup>

This portrait of the personified *liṅga* actually performing labor and doing so for the joy of accomplishment rather than for remuneration is even more graphically depicted outside the corpus of Basava’s *vacana*-s.<sup>19</sup> In the fifteenth-century *Śūnyasampādane*, for example, is the story of Nuliya Candayya, a reed cutter and rope maker. One day, while cutting reeds, Nuliya lost his *īṣṭaliṅga* into the water. Casting aside any concern for ritual prescriptions in favor of personal piety expressed through work, Nuliya went on about his business. The *liṅga*, in a comically delightful episode, sprouted arms and legs and chased after Nuliya imploring him to take it back. He agreed to do so, but only on the condition that the

*liṅga* itself continue to perform its assigned daily tasks of cutting reeds and making ropes.<sup>20</sup>

This later tradition reflects a rather peculiar vision of *liṅga*, but it serves to indicate that *liṅga* was perceived to be not simply an inanimate stone object. Rather *liṅga* could be seen as wholly personal and fully active. When coupled with the previous image of *liṅga*'s activity as dispensation of salvific grace, a portrait emerges of a personal agent active in the salvation of humankind.

It is for that reason that Basava can speak of a *liṅga* which works tirelessly and without remuneration. His notion that *liṅga* is a personal and personalized agent, actively concerned about and involved in the salvation of human beings seems none other than the idea of God as the divine Lord (*iśvara*). This surmise is confirmed by several *vacana*-s from Basava in which *liṅga* is addressed in the vocative, sometimes in apposition with other titles or words for the Lord.

O Liṅga, is it my fault that I was born?  
 O Liṅga, pray, for former births  
 Grant your forgiveness! ...  
 O Lord of the Meeting Rivers.

—Basava<sup>21</sup>

And why should you, O Lord of the Meeting Rivers, all-virtuous *liṅga*, Look so for sin in me?

—Basava<sup>22</sup>

Such invocations hardly seem addressed to an impersonal and inanimate object. On the contrary, they reflect an image of *liṅga* as a sentient being, aware of and judgmental toward human actions and shortcomings and capable of graciously forgiving human faults and weaknesses. In fact, the appositive construction, brings “*liṅga*” into parallel and apparent identity with the term of divine address which Basava uses throughout his *vacana*-s—namely, “*kūḍala saṅgama dēva*, Lord of the Meeting Rivers.” As such, *liṅga* appears to be a name or term of address for supreme divinity.

This salvific role of *liṅga* as a personalized and personified Lord, as *saguna brahman*, is further demonstrated by Basava's insistence that one must have faith in or trust in *liṅga*; that is one must take refuge in the Lord.

He who knows the *Gītā* is not wise;  
 The master of words, is not wise;

He only is wise who has faith in *liṅga*. ...  
 He is wise who takes refuge in  
 Our Lord of the Meeting Rivers.

—Basava<sup>23</sup>

Once again *liṅga* appears not as a mere inanimate object but as a locus of trustworthy power. Furthermore, it appears again in parallel with *kūdala saṅgama deva* so that the refuge and faith one reposes in the Lord of the Meeting Rivers is indistinguishable from the faith one entrusts upon *liṅga*. Note also that *liṅga* here is specifically contrasted to such inanimate objects as “words” and scripture. Its active role in the spiritual life is exactly what those inanimate religious objects cannot match.

Such faith or trust in *liṅga* leads to a recognition of the transforming power of *liṅga* as the abiding inner presence of a metaphysical reality. The transforming power of this metaphysical reality is expressed by Basava in the image of an outer glow occasioned by that inner presence.

*Liṅga* can be seen shining on the believer's face;  
 The Lord, unblinking, abides in the believer race. ...  
 O Lord of the Meeting Rivers.

—Basava<sup>24</sup>

Hence *liṅga* cannot be seen merely as a concrete cult object for it is also an active power in the spiritual life of the devotee. It is, in some real sense, a spiritual entity which becomes, within the inner life of the devotee, a spiritual infection and does not remain merely an external bodily affectation. As the *vacana* indicates, when the *liṅga* is truly present it not only shines on the external body but also abides as Lord within the believer and company of believers.

The transforming potency of the *liṅga* which Basava seems to intend here and elsewhere hints at that term's reference to something which is not only transcendent and supra-empiric but also indefinably abstract. In fact, the ineffability of the *liṅga*'s nature and of its power finds rather clear expression in Basava's *vacana*.

Earth, water, fire, and ether are within the supreme *liṅga*  
 Which is the foundation and the origin.  
*Liṅga* is the incomprehensible  
 Having no beginning, no middle, no end. ...  
 O Lord of the Meeting Rivers.

—Basava<sup>25</sup>

Obviously, Basava's understanding of *liṅga* is not confined to a mere amulet suspended on the body of the devotee. Encompassing within it the very elements of which all material existence is composed, it pre-exists, supports, and extends beyond the finite limits of material existence. In fact, it extends beyond the very capacity of human comprehension with its beginning, middle, and end unavailable to human imagining. In this sense, *liṅga*, for Basava, connotes not a mere phallus but the unfathomable pillar of light (*jyotirlīṅga*) which Śaiva tradition often utilizes to indicate the eternal, infinite, and characterless omnipotence of Lord Śiva.<sup>26</sup> By insisting on the indescribability and immeasurability of *liṅga*, Basava seems to indicate its incomparability to any object or concept except the uncharacterized absolute, the *nirguṇa brahman*.

Elsewhere, Basava makes more explicit the inadequacy of human wisdom—whether “divinely revealed scripture” (*śruti*) or “natural human logic” (*tarka*)—for understanding, grasping, or indicating the true nature of *liṅga*'s absoluteness and otherness. He says:

Not knowing how to explain it,  
The *Veda*-s quake and tremble  
Because *liṅga* is inexplicable.  
Not knowing how to encompass it,  
The *Śāstra*-s finally proclaim,  
That the *liṅga* is inconceivable.  
Not knowing how to reason it out,  
Logic is driven witless  
Because *liṅga* is beyond thought.  
Not knowing how to proceed,  
The *Agama*-s become bogged down  
Because *liṅga* is unattainable.  
Neither men nor angels can see it as it is.  
Only the true devotee is fit  
For our Lord of the Meeting Rivers.

—Basava<sup>27</sup>

Thus negating several of the means of valid knowledge—*śruti*, *smṛti*, and the entire science of *tarka*—Basava portrays *liṅga* as beyond the ken of finite epistemology. The obvious comparison from orthodox tradition is to the indescribable absolute of Upaniṣadic thought, the non-objectified essence of being, the *nirguṇa brahman*.

In fact, that non-objectifiable essence is specifically described as other than the usual states of human knowing. It is formless, bodiless, infinite, and incommensurable, as Basava declares in a *vacana*.

The states of great *liṅga* are nothing but the names of *liṅga*.

*Liṅga* is other! It is neither formed nor formless.

*Liṅga* is other! It is not associated with a body.

*Liṅga* is other! It is far beyond even the greatest matter.

There is no comparison to the position

Of our Lord of the Meeting Rivers.

—Basava<sup>28</sup>

In fine, for Basava, *liṅga* can not be confined to a mere bodily amulet, nor to a mere phallic representation. Rather it is, in some sense, eternal, infinite, characterless, and incomparable to any objectified or conceptualized human knowing. It, quite simply, can be seen as it truly is “neither by men nor by angels.” It is wholly within itself, the Unseen Seer of Upanisadic metaphysical speculation—i.e., the *nirguṇa brahman*.

Basava’s *vacana*-s, then, are seen to refer often and clearly to *liṅga* both as a personal divinity, directly involved in human salvation and known to humans by His/Her gracious attributes (*saguṇa brahman*) and also as some sort of indescribable, transcendent, metaphysical absolute (*nirguṇa brahman*). Far from being a simple stone object, *liṅga* is, for Basava, both a symbol and, in some genuine sense, the reality of a transcendent absolute. In other words, *liṅga* may accurately be referred to not only as “it” but also as “He” or “She” and as “IT”—that ineffable reality behind phenomenality.<sup>29</sup>

A sincere recognition of the centrality of this transcendent quality of *liṅga* in Basava’s *vacana*-s leads to a reconsideration of those *vacana*-s where Basava seems to be referring to the stone *liṅga* image in the palm. Close scrutiny reveals that in many, though admittedly not in all, of those cases the word “*liṅga*” is accompanied by a qualifier which allows Basava to specify that in this case he intends the concrete object on the palm. When Basava intends the object on the palm as a concrete focus of veneration, he is likely to refer to the “*liṅga* on the palm” (*kaiyalli liṅga*) or to the “*liṅga* on the body” (*aṅgayyo!agāna liṅga*) or to the “trappings of *liṅga*” (*liṅga lāñchana*).<sup>30</sup>

In fact, where many translators have retained the word “*liṅga*” in their renditions of the *vacana*-s, closer scrutiny often reveals an entirely different word, particularly when there seems to be straightforward reference to the focus of objective worship. Commonly used words are “*karasthala*”, which means primarily “the

hand" or "the place in the hand"; "*kuruhu*", a word meaning "mark, sign, token, characteristic"; "*lāñchana*", meaning "mark, sign, token, spot, stain, stigma"; and "*kavaca*", which means primarily "armour, a coat of mail" and secondarily "an amulet, a charm".<sup>31</sup>

Unfortunately, many translators—primarily Western educated or influenced Indians—have not been sufficiently meticulous in observing this distinction.<sup>32</sup> Having elected to retain the word "*liṅga*" in their translations from Kannada, primarily into English, they have rather assumed that such near synonymns to "*liṅga*" could be rendered by the word "*liṅga*" itself with no attention to subtle theological issues. By and large such translation efforts have been acceptably accurate and certainly valuable, but they leave room for misinterpretation on what is, for Basava at least, a crucial theological point. Their value as hermeneutical device, though not their beauty as literary expression, is thereby critically marred.

When more careful attention is paid to these distinctive usages, Basava's *vacana*-s are seen to refer often and clearly to *liṅga* both as an indescribably transcendent metaphysical absolute (*nirguna brahman*) and as a personal divinity, directly involved in human salvation and known to humans by His/Her gracious attributes (*saguṇa brahman*). When Basava intends less transcendent reference to the concrete object venerated upon the palm of the Vīraśaiva, he seems capable of utilizing either a qualifier or an entirely different word in order to make his meaning clear.

Seen in this light, claims by modern Vīraśaiva-s, such as Swami Lingananda's, prove to be founded not simply upon apologetic desires but upon the claims of the Vīraśaiva tradition from its beginnings. Both Lingananda's assertions that *liṅga* is "the Absolute ... formless, peerless ... without attributes," and his description of *liṅga* as "Paraśiva" and as *saccidānanda*<sup>33</sup> are but reiterations of what faithful Vīraśaiva-s have been saying about *liṅga* from the earliest days of that movement. Furthermore, his effort to distinguish *liṅga* as absolute principle from the *liṅga* of worship (*istaliṅga*) no longer appears an artificial device utilized for apologetic purposes, but finds sanction within some of the earliest expressions of the movement's faith.

Far from being a construct of a later, more philosophical, more Sanskritized, or more apologetically inclined age, the idea of “*liṅga* as Lord Supreme” was known already to Vīraśaiva-s of Basava’s time. Any effort to understand the Vīraśaivism of the present MUST take that fundamentally transcendent meaning of the term into account. Yet, what is most surprising about the Vīraśaiva understanding of *liṅga* is not that it has reference to a transcendent reality but that Westerners, particularly those influenced by psycho-sexual theories of religious symbolism, have had so much trouble grasping the Vīraśaiva-s’ point.

The difficulty is especially confounding when set against the simple but almost unanimous testimony of Hindus, Vīraśaiva and others alike, that *liṅga* has for them no phallic connotations. For example, the eminently qualified scholar of comparative religion, K. L. Seshagiri Rao, has averred that during the first quarter century of his life he must have visited hundreds of Śaiva temples and venerated *liṅga* thousands of times. During that time not once did any idea of *liṅga* as phallus occur to him. It was only later, when reading Western authors on comparative religion, that the phallic connotation was suggested to him, irreparably destroying his simple, but genuinely Hindu, vision of *liṅga* as symbol of supreme divinity.<sup>34</sup> In light of such unanimous testimony, the point should not be so hard to grasp.

Of course, none of this argument is meant to ignore or deny the apparent wealth of psycho-sexual reference throughout Hindu mythology. In many Hindu myths, it is well-nigh impossible to overlook the phallic connotations of the *liṅga* symbol. What is intended is a stern reminder that most religious symbols function on many levels of meaning. Just as the fabled auto-erotic use of the crucifix should not detract from the ultimate, transcendent reference of that symbol for Christians, so too should the phallic potency of the *liṅga* symbol not detract from its ultimate, transcendent reference in the hearts and minds of pious Hindu-s—Śaiva-s in general and Vīraśaiva-s in particular.

The common difficulty in grasping this crucial point becomes utterly baffling when placed beside the obvious observation that, for the patron saint of psycho-sexual interpretations of religious symbols—that is, for Jung himself—the sub-terranean ithyphallus

of his dream was not simply a sexual symbol but also a theological one. His young mind associated that hidden object described by his mother's statement "That is the man-eater" with his fears of the robed and hidden Catholic priests. Describing those priests by the phrase "That is a Jesuit", he further connected the word "Jesuit" with the word "Jesus" and arrived at a potent, if somewhat muddled, equation of "the dark Lord Jesus, the Jesuit, and the phallus [as] identical." Unfortunately many of his followers and others influenced by his thinking have either failed to grasp his point here or have interpreted it as an utter reduction of the transcendent to the anatomical. Jung's own richer interpretation of this symbolic identity better accords with Viraśaiva notions.<sup>35</sup>

For, more than mere anatomy, more than generativity, more even than a concrete symbol of some other reality, "*liṅga*", for Viraśaiva-s, refers also, even primarily, to the transcendent perceived both as inanimate absolute and as personal Lord. So it was in Basava's time and so it is for Viraśaiva-s of the present.

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<sup>1</sup> C. G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, ed. Aniela Jaffé, trans. Richard & Clara Winston (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), pp. 11-15.

<sup>2</sup> *Śūnyasampādane* [of Gūlūra Siddhavirāṇāryaru], 5 vols., ed. with Introduction, Text, Transliteration, Translation, Notes and Comments by S. C. Nandimath, L. M. A. Menezes, R. C. Hiremath, S. S. Bhoosnurmath, & M. S. Sunkapur, with Forewords by D. C. Pavate & A. S. Adke (Dharwar: Karnatak University, 1965-1972), chap. 1; vol. I, pp. 45-125.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, the comments of the Abbé J. A. Dubois, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, 3rd ed., trans. & ed. Henry K. Beauchamp (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1906), pp. 630-631; Stevenson as cited in F. Kittel, *Über den Ursprung des Lingakultus in Indien* (Mangalore: Basel Mission Book & Tract Depository, 1876), p. 4; and R. C. Artal, "A Short Account of the Reformed Shaiva or Veerashaiva Faith," *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay* 8:3 (1909): 172-175, especially the note on p. 172.

<sup>4</sup> For example, see C. G. Jung, M.-L. von Franz, Joseph L. Henderson, Jolande Jacobi, and Aniela Jaffé, *Man and His Symbols* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1964), pp. 90-92.

<sup>5</sup> See F. Kittel, *A Kannada-English Dictionary* (Mangalore: Basel Mission Book & Tract Depository, 1894), s.v. "*liṅga*".

<sup>6</sup> There are two main parties in the etymological dispute. One led by Przyluski argues that the word is non-Indo-European and derives from the Austro-Asiatic

root *√kal* which yields the Sanskritized form *lāṅgalam*, meaning both “penis” and “plow”. The other party lead by Burrow argues that the word is Indo-European in origin and derives from the prefix *ni-* plus the root *√anj*, yielding first *nyaṅga*, then *niṅga*, and finally *liṅga* and meaning “sign, mark, token”. On this tangled and relatively unenlightening debate see Manfred Mayrhofer, *Kurzgefasstes etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, Universitätsverlag, 1967), s.v. “*liṅga*”; J. Przyluski, “Non-Aryan Loans in Indo-Aryan,” in Sylvain Lévi, Jean Przyluski, and Jules Bloch, *Pre-Aryan and Pre-Dravidian in India*, trans., Prabodh Chandra Bagchi (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1929), pp. 8-15; and T. M. A. Burrow, “Sanskrit Etymological Notes,” in *Sarūpa-Bhāratī*, ed. Jagan Nath Agrawal & Bhim Dev Shastri (Hoshiarpur: Vishveshvaranand Institute Publications, 1954), pp. 9-10.

<sup>7</sup> Swami Shri Kumar, “The Linga in Veerashaivism,” *Prabuddha Bharata* 47 (1942): 181.

<sup>8</sup> S. C. Nandimath, *A Handbook of Vīraśaivism*, with a Foreword by R. D. Ranade (Dharwar: L. E. Association, 1942), p. 115.

<sup>9</sup> M. R. Sakhare, *History and Philosophy of Lingayat Religion (being an introduction to LINGADHĀRANACHANDRIKĀ of Nandikeshwara (with translation and full notes))*, with a Foreword by Sir S. Radhakrishnan (Balguam: By the author, 134 Thalakwadi P.O., [1942]), pp. 315-324.

<sup>10</sup> Swami Lingananda, *Emblem of God*, Suyidhana Publication Series no. 38, trans. S. M. Angadi (Dharwar: Suyidhana Sugrantha Maale, Jaganmata Ak-kamahdevi Ashrama, 1973). The distinction between the Absolute (*liṅga*) and the object of worship (*iṣṭaliṅga*) is made explicit on p. 20; the quotation occurs on p. 35.

<sup>11</sup> The most comprehensive account of Basava’s biography taking into consideration both the legendary and the epigraphical evidence, is P. B. Desai, *Basavesvara and His Times*, with a Foreword by D. C. Pavate (Dharwar: Karnatak University, Kannada Research Institute, 1968). Though Basava is the most widely accepted candidate as a founder of the movement, there are serious counterclaims and denominational disagreements. For more on these disputes, see R. Blake Michael, “Foundation Myths of the Two Denominations of Vīraśaivism: *Virakta-s* and *Gurusthalin-s*,” *Journal of Asian Studies* XLII.2 (1983 February).

<sup>12</sup> The best edition of Basava’s *vacana-s* is *Basavaṇṇanavarava Vacangalu*, ed. R. C. Hiremath, with a Foreword by A. S. Adke (Dharwar: Karnatak University, 1968) [hereafter abbreviated *BV* (K)]. The translation of preference is *Vacanas of Basavanna*, Taralabālu Granthamāle—2, ed. H. Deveerappa, trans. L. M. A. Menezes & S. M. Angadi, with an Introduction by Sivakumāra Śivācārya (Sirigeri: Annana Balaga, 1967) [hereafter abbreviated *BV* (E)]. The *vacana* quoted is *BV* 157: (K), p. 70; (E), p. 52. This translation and others, unless noted, are by the present author. Compare also *BV* (K & E) 104, 144, 177, 183, 189, 193, 399, 563, 578, 628, 745, 776, 819, 832, 915.

<sup>13</sup> For example, at *BV* 172: (K), p. 75; (E), pp. 56f., Basava says: “Getting up at the crack of dawn/ Bring water and *bilva* leaves on/ For the worship of *liṅga*. ” Compare also *BV* (K & E) 194, 229, 355, 426, 626, 672.

<sup>14</sup> *BV* 137: (K), p. 62; (E), p. 45. Compare *BV* (K & E) 142, 403, 516, 645, 107, 492, 496, 605, 608, 618, 647, 717, 719, 733, 769, 796.

<sup>15</sup> These concepts are discussed throughout the Vīraśaiva literature. Most convenient is probably A. K. Ramanujan, “The Six-Phase System (*Satsthala Siddhānta*),” pp. 169-174 in *Speaking of Śiva*, ed. & trans. A. K. Ramanujan (Baltimore: Penguin Books Inc., 1973). The terms *ātmaliṅga*, *prāṇaliṅga*, and *svayaliṅga* find expression in the *vacana-s* at *BV* (K & E) 89, 443, 807, 837, 946.

<sup>16</sup> *BV* 790: (K), p. 319; (E), pp. 262-263. Compare *BV* (K & E) 406, 461, 473, 507, 734, 768, 777, 833.

<sup>17</sup> The gender identification of the personal Lord in Vīraśaivism and in Śaivism in general seems to be rather ambiguous. As Śiva and consort Śakti are subsumed under a more abstracted, a-sexual, metaphysical conception, so are the masculine and feminine aspects of the *liṅga* symbol subsumed under a conception of the undifferentiated and omnipotent *liṅga*, as both male and female. Compare, for example, the *Śiva Mahāpurāṇa*, *Vidyēśvarasamhitā* 16:94-95 & 106-107. Beyond the gender identification of the divine, there is also the gender identification of the ascetic or of the mystic who seeks a unitive state with the lord. On this point, see Carl Olson, "The Śaiva Mystic and the Symbol of Androgyny," *Religious Studies* 17.3 (1981 September): 377-386.

<sup>18</sup> *BV* 113: (K), p. 53; (E), pp. 37-38. Compare *BV* (K & E) 95, 150, 171, 206, 236, 451, 646, 772, 797, 802, 823, 877, 941.

<sup>19</sup> Actually Nuliya Candayya's name does find mention in one *vacana* attributed to Basava—that which appears in the *Śūnyasampādane* [of Gūlūra Siddhavīraṇāryaru] at chap. 14, verse 38; vol. 4, pp. 176-177. That *vacana*, however, is not contained in the standard collections of Basava's writings.

<sup>20</sup> Nuliya Candayya's story appears in its entirety in the *Śūnyasampādane* [of Gūlūra Siddhavīraṇāryaru] chap. 14; vol. 4, pp. 127-192. The tale and its implications for the Vīraśaiva sense of vocation is discussed by R. Blake Michael, "Work as Worship in Vīraśaiva Tradition," in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. L. 4 (1982 December): 101-115.

<sup>21</sup> *BV* 21: (K), p. 12; (E), p. 10. Translation follows Menezes & Angadi.

<sup>22</sup> *BV* 67: (K), p. 31; (E), p. 23. Compare *BV* (K & E) 80, 270, 315, 367, 372, 495, 504, 541, 743, 894.

<sup>23</sup> *BV* 153: (K), pp. 68-69; (E), pp. 50-51. Compare *BV* (K & E) 273, 276, 390, 391, 525, 727, 783, 789, 826.

<sup>24</sup> *BV* 145: (K), p. 65; (E), p. 48. Compare *BV* (K & E) 89, 363, 443, 654, 678, 799, 807, 836, 837, 845, 850, 861, 881, 946.

<sup>25</sup> *BV* 949: (K), p. 395; (E), pp. 319f. Compare *BV* (K & E) 285, 550, 943, 948.

<sup>26</sup> For example at *Vayu Purāṇa* 55. 13-57; *Liṅga Purāṇa* 1.17.32-59; and *Kūrma Purāṇa* 1.25.67-101.

<sup>27</sup> *BV* 952: (K), p. 396; (E), p. 320.

<sup>28</sup> *BV* 950: (K), p. 395; (E), p. 320.

<sup>29</sup> In (non-Vīra-) Śaiva texts, similar perceptions of *liṅga* abound. Amidst much repetitive panegyric, the *Śiva Mahāpurāṇa*, for example, describes Lord Śiva in embodied form as the highest form of divinity with qualities (*sakalā*) and Lord Śiva in *liṅga* form as the highest form of divinity without qualities (*niṣkalā*) (*Vidyēśvarasamhitā* 5:9-13). In fact, Śiva's superiority over the gods is asserted to be his possession of such a qualityless mode as highest *brahman* (*Vidyēśvarasamhitā* 5:14). Worship of this qualityless mode of Śiva as *liṅga* is particularly prescribed for those who find lower forms of ritual distasteful (*Vidyēśvarasamhitā* 18:56).

<sup>30</sup> These phrases occur respectively at *BV* 108: (K), p. 51; (E), p. 36; at *BV* 484: (K), p. 190; (E), p. 156; and at *BV* 106: (K), p. 50; (E), p. 35.

<sup>31</sup> These words occur, for example, at *BV* 647: (K), pp. 259-260; (E), p. 214; at *BV* 743: (K), p. 297; (E), pp. 244-245; at *BV* 206: (K), p. 87; (E), p. 67; at *BV* 948: (K), p. 394; (E), p. 319; at *BV* 3: (K), pp. 2-3; (E), p. 3; at *BV* 192: (K), p. 82; (E), pp. 62-63; and at *BV* 224: (K), p. 94; (E), p. 73.

<sup>32</sup> Most prominent among such translators have been teams working under the direction of Professor L. M. A. Menezes of Karnatak University, Dharwar.

Overall their translation efforts have produced beautifully readable and acceptably reliable poetry of a high order. Nonetheless, like most such massive undertakings, they have paid insufficient attention to one aspect of the translator's task—in this case, the theological implications of certain diction.

<sup>33</sup> Lingananda, *Emblem of God*, p. 35.

<sup>34</sup> Oral communication, cited with permission.

<sup>35</sup> Jung's ideas appear in his *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, pp. 11-15.

## RISE AND FALL\*

(*Review article*)

A. WASSERSTEIN

With volume 16 of Part II the editors of *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* begin the publication of the material relating to religion in the Roman Empire. They deal mostly with the first three imperial centuries but cannot avoid here and there going back to the republican and hellenistic periods. This is inevitable for a number of different reasons: partly because of the nature of this work, since it is not structured as a single unitary work informed by the synoptic plan and the connected and correlated interests of a single author; it is an amorphous collection of papers interesting, valuable and important in themselves, but not growing together into a coherent whole. To this architectonic limitation there is added another: the subject matter treated here is not Roman religion but the religions of the Roman world. These are many and various, although they are roughly classifiable (as is done here) into polytheistic and monotheistic religions, the latter being practically confined to Judaism and Christianity. Of the volumes reviewed here II 16, 1-2 and II 17,1 deal with the former group; while volume II 19 begins the treatment of Judaism and volume II 23 is the first of a series dealing with early Christianity, particularly that of the first three centuries. Volumes II 8 and 9 do not treat of religion as such but are concerned with the political, social, and

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\* *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*. II. Teil. *Principat*.

Band 8 ed. Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase, 1977, pp. X + 939; DM. 460.—

Band 9,1 and 9,2 ed. Hildegard Temporini, 1976 and 1978, pp. XVIII + 1361; DM. 240.— and DM. 360.—

Band 16,1 and 16,2 ed. Wolfgang Haase, 1978, pp. XIX + 1773; DM. 375.— and DM. 420.—

Band 17,1 ed. Wolfgang Haase, 1981, pp. VII + 558; DM. 280.—

Published by Walter de Gruyter, Berlin and New York.

economic background of the history of religions in the Roman empire (and the areas adjacent to it). Readers of this journal will, of course, be more interested in the volumes devoted specifically to religion. Even so, they will find much to interest and to instruct them in the "historical" volumes; for they describe those political and social conditions in biblical and other lands an understanding of which is often indispensable for understanding religious, sectarian and ecclesiastical developments.

As I have noted above, this work is not a unified history of ancient religions. It is a collection of papers not always obviously related to each other. Hence the reviewer cannot address himself to those points which normally engage his attention: What are the principal questions that the author poses to himself? What use does he make of the material available to him in discussing these questions? Are his conclusions reasonable and acceptable? How do they fit into the larger framework of knowledge and scholarly preoccupation in the field with which he deals?

In our case the reviewer must be content with indicating, summarily, what the contents of these volumes are, addressing himself only selectively to some issues raised by one of the authors or another. Inevitably, the reviewer's choice will be arbitrary and will be largely dictated by the idiosyncrasy of his interests and even more severely by the limits imposed by his lack of familiarity with, and knowledge of, the vast amount of material offered here. There cannot be many readers of these volumes able to boast the erudition required for dealing adequately with all the contributions here published. Even the summary indication of the contents will have to be extremely selective: a simple list of the articles contained in these volumes and of the names of their authors, with only a word or two of comment, would require a number of pages larger perhaps than can be devoted to the review as a whole. I shall therefore confine myself, in general, to mentioning only those articles which seem to me to be of wider and more general interest. It ought to be said, however, that there are here also a great number of other extremely learned and useful papers of more specialist appeal.

Vols. II 8 and II 9, 1-2 are mainly concerned with historical, political, social and economic matters. Of the many important papers offered here I mention only the following:

B. Lifshitz, *Études sur l'histoire de la province de Syrie*, a short paper including a valuable discussion of cults and divinities; the same author's *Scythopolis. L'histoire, les institutions et les cultes de la ville à l'époque hellénistique et impériale*; H. J. W. Drijvers, *Hatra, Palmyra und Edessa. Die Städte der syrisch-mesopotamischen Wüste in politischer, kulturgechichtlicher und religionsgeschichtlicher Beleuchtung*, a paper characterized by outstanding erudition, exemplary clarity in exposition, and extraordinary facility in bringing together the results of archaeological, historical, and literary investigations, using all the resources of philology, numismatics, and epigraphy (in the part of this monograph which is devoted to Palmyra Drijvers acknowledges the collaboration of M. J. Versteegh); J. Neusner, *The Jews East of the Euphrates and the Roman Empire I. 1st-3rd Centuries A.D.* (interesting not only for the material on the history of Babylonian Jewry but also for the light it throws on the relations between the Jews outside the empire and the nation in its homeland); and finally, a valuable short paper at the beginning of Halbband 9,2, by Albrecht Dihle, *Die entdeckungsgeschichtlichen Voraussetzungen des Indienhandels der römischen Kaiserzeit*, not indeed concerned with religion, but of great importance nevertheless to students of religious and cultural diffusion, since it raises in passing the interesting question how far e.g. the first beginnings and the later developments of Christianity in India, or the hellenistic influences in the plastic arts in India and other regions of Asia are to be related to commercial connections between Rome and India.

Volumes 16, 1-2 deal with Roman religion in the narrower sense. They contain enlightening discussions of the literary sources of our knowledge of Roman religion; of relevant archaeological and even architectural material; they treat of cultic issues in relation to temples, to priests, and to the emperors; we are offered investigations of the origins and the nature of Roman feasts; we can also read here about the philosophical aspects of Roman religion and, as is inevitable, a good deal of discussion about the relation of religion and state (emperor), both in Rome and in the provinces; we read also about religion in the army and in domestic life, about philosophy and magic and dreams and many other things.

Of the more general contributions I would mention the learned and extremely useful paper by J. Beaujeu, *Le paganisme romain sous le*

*Haut Empire*, a short but instructive introduction to the subject which in spite of its brevity manages to combine a “Forschungsgeschichte” with a discussion of the source material. The author remarks pertinently that the time has not yet come for a synthetic treatment of the religious history of the Roman empire. If this statement about the present implies a hope for the future, the reader, or some readers, will, perhaps inevitably, ask whether the time for such a synthesis will ever come. The nature and form of the publishing enterprise of ANRW as it is presented by the editors is such that it must, if it is justifiable at all, be justified precisely on the ground that a synthetic treatment of all the issues and problems involved in the history of religion(s) in the Roman empire is impossible.

Another welcome bibliographical contribution, much longer in extent but considerably more restricted in scope is that of P. Herz, *Bibliographie zum römischen Kaiserkult (1955-1975)*.

Mr. Harold W. Attridge's *The Philosophical Critique of Religion under the Early Empire* offers a useful and perceptive survey of criticism of religion in general and of particular religious beliefs and practices. This criticism originated often in philosophical circles, but the arguments developed there were used elsewhere, too. In his clear exposition of Sceptic agnosticism based on criticism of theistic and anti-theistic arguments Mr. Attridge rightly notes that this exposition of various theological arguments is based on a long process of scholastic systematization and transmission. (In his discussion of the various arguments advanced for and against the theist position as expounded by “Socrates” in Xen. *Memorabilia* 1.4.2 [S.E. *Adv. Phys.* 1.92-97] he does not seem to me to do justice altogether adequately to the criticism [of the Socratic position] as reported by Sextus Empiricus. The criticism of the “Socratic” *inductive* argument is based on an *analogy* between the microcosm of the human body and the macrocosm, as is evidenced by the use of the analogy between the four “elements” and the four “humours”; this fact is ignored by the theistic rebuttal of this criticism.) He also makes the point that the theology of the Epicureans was in some ways quite conservative, not only in maintaining the anthropomorphism of the gods but also in its respect for traditional cult practices; and that their opposition to *particular*

cultic phenomena was closely bound up with their rejection of arguments for providence and fate.

In his treatment of the Cynic Oenomaus of Gadara one would have welcomed discussion or at least mention of the remarkable and somewhat paradoxical fact that his most virulent critic in antiquity was Julian the Apostate, and that practically all the rest of our knowledge about him comes from Christian and Jewish sources (Oenomaus is one of the very few Greek philosophers mentioned in ancient rabbinic literature).

What becomes clear from Attridge's survey of ancient criticism of traditional religious beliefs and practices is the pervasive influence, on non-philosophical critics no less than on philosophers, of Cynic and Epicurean arguments; these are found even in authors whose attitude to religion is generally favourable, and Attridge points out that the combination of criticism and positive piety is common in the first two centuries of the Christian era. This combination is, of course, found in Stoic circles, but also among Neopythagoreans.

Whether Philo really belongs in this company of philosophical critics of religion seems to me doubtful; for his attitude to pagan religion is, I should have thought, primarily informed by his adherence to Judaism, another *religion*. Nevertheless, Attridge is right to note that Philo draws on the tradition of philosophical condemnation of pagan religious superstition for arguments in his apologetic exposition of Jewish belief.

In the last part of this valuable paper Attridge makes the interesting point that, as time went on, religious philosophy became less critical of religious belief and practice, and that the arguments which philosophers had developed were taken up and exploited by Christians, while philosophers sought to understand, defend and rationalise religious phenomena.

This is an excellent paper, clearly argued and well presented. (By the way, Mr. Attridge's proofreader has not served him well; twice on the same page 51 he attributes to him the suggestion that *sorites* is the plural form of the name of the well known logical fallacy).

In *Das römische Fatum — Begriff und Verwendung* W. Pötscher begins with a thorough investigation of the etymological connexions of *Fatum/Fata* and then examines the literary evidence as found in Virgil, in Silver Latin epic writers, and in Seneca, Pliny and

Tacitus. He emphasizes the religious (and the philosophical) component of the term *fatum* against W. F. Otto and others who had argued that *fatum* belongs to the domain of poetical diction and that it originally had little to do with religious categories. The portion of this paper devoted to literary exemplification and illustration is well done. We find here much that is instructive and plausible, and we learn a good deal of the religious and philosophical contents of the *fatum* concept in early imperial Rome. I am rather less happy with the introductory section: it is informative and it contains much material that many readers will find interesting and indeed fascinating; but the author seems to me to put too much trust in the efficacy of the etymological method; the genetic history of a word does not always enlighten us about the content of a concept denoted by that word in actual use. Herr Pötscher is a serious scholar; but playing around with etymologies is a serious and dangerous pastime, potentially harmful to truth and always liable to lead us astray, particularly if it is meant to issue in conclusions of historical or philosophical significance. The example of Heidegger should provide a salutary warning.

In *The Ruler and the Logos in Neopythagorean, Middle Platonic and Late Stoic Political Philosophy*, Mr. Glenn F. Chesnut examines an important and widespread tradition which regarded the ruler as the embodiment on earth of the Law or Reason or Logos of God. In its philosophical formulation this doctrine may have had its roots in various Neopythagorean writings. Traces or echoes of it can, however, be found in the most varied sources, such as Plutarch and Seneca and even earlier, in Cicero, and in Philo of Alexandria, and it survived into the age of the new religion when Eusebius proclaimed that the Christian emperor was the image on earth of the heavenly rulership of the divine Logos.

Mr. Chesnut tends to accept an early dating for the so-called Pythagorean Pseudepigrapha (which some scholars would put as early as the third century B.C., while others go down as far as the second century A.D.). But quite independently of any attempt at a precise dating he ascribes great importance to this material for illuminating an otherwise fairly dark and unknown area of political thought, and sees in it "an extreme version of the official political philosophy which formed the intellectual underpinning for the

Romano-Hellenistic ruler cult." It is interesting to see how varied the philosophical elements are that seem to have gone into the formulation of the doctrine of the divine ruler. They come from Plato and the Pythagoreans, the Stoics and the Cynics; and one is struck by the fact that the theoreticians go so far as to turn the Stoic paradox "only the wise man is king" upside down: the king, as such, is wise and pure and divine.

Mr. Chesnut perhaps forces his material a little in order to fit the echoes in Cicero to his thesis. But he seems to me to be completely justified in pointing to passages in Philo which use at least the *terminology* that we find also in ancient writers on divine kingship. Thus he draws attention to the fact that Philo speaks of Moses as the *nomos empsychos kai logikos*, the rational (or: articulate?) embodiment of the Law. (For more on this see Mr. Charles H. Talbert's paper mentioned below.) Now, it is, of course, true that for Philo such an expression, whatever he may have meant precisely by it, whether he was speaking allegorically, analogically, figuratively, rhetorically, hyperbolically, no matter how his expression should be classified, clearly did not mean anything that would in any way amount to a departure from strict monotheism, or to the ascription of divinity to a human being in any sense that would be parallel to that which would be understood by a pagan. Nevertheless, expressions such as that quoted above and others like it may well come from sources which through other channels delivered a rather different message couched in the same terms. Still, to say, as Mr. Chesnut does, that this general pagan mode of thought affected contemporary Jewish *ideas* seems to me exaggerated. Words mean different things to different users. And although it is true and significant that Eusebius like Philo uses language reminiscent of that which we find in pagan hellenistic and Roman writers about the relation of the ruler to God and/or the Logos, yet it is equally true in both cases that for the Christian as for the Jew, whatever language they used, and whatever metaphors or similes or hyperbolae insinuated themselves into their expositions, it remained clear that the ruler was a man, that he was not of divine nature, that he was subject to the Law of God, that he remained capable of sinning, and that he was liable to be held responsible for his sins. Still, Mr. Chesnut does well to show how pervasive the language of the ruler

cult is. And it is, of course, true that the use of certain kinds of language may have much to do with the moulding of attitudes. And it is certainly true that the Christian conception of the emperor's temporal reign being a reflection on earth of the heavenly and eternal Logos had drawn much on pagan philosophical discourse. One small point: Mr. Chesnut ought perhaps also to have addressed himself to the not uninteresting question as to how far hellenistic ideas of the divine ruler were themselves influenced by oriental theory and practice.

In *Biographies of Philosophers and Rulers as Instruments of Religious Propaganda in Mediterranean Antiquity* Mr. Charles H. Talbert examines the nature and function of biographies of teachers and rulers in their cultic and religious connections, their use of myth, their use of "succession" lists, and particularly the place of the synoptic Gospels among such biographies. Of especial interest here I found the discussion of the function of succession lists and narratives. There existed a wellknown genre of "Philosophiegeschichte" in antiquity arranged in *diadochai*, of which we have examples in Diogenes Laertius and in the rabbinic tradition, most notably in the Mishna Tractate *Aboth*. It was the function of such succession narratives to give not only a connected history of earlier philosophical or theological traditions, but also, and indeed primarily, to use the "fact" of the "succession" as an instrument for validating the doctrines of an *existing* school. Mr. Talbert does well to remind us in this context that the life of an ancient philosophical school often exhibits features reminiscent of that of a religious community; though he goes perhaps a little too far in choosing as an illustration the Epicurean school. He quotes much impressive evidence to support his interpretation, but much of this seems to be the expression of rhetorical exaggeration and the result of the enthusiastic use of figurative language rather than dry and precise description of real fact or *belief*. Even though one occasionally feels that Mr. Talbert is somewhat overdoing the schematism of his classifications and the application of his schemata to the discussion of the material with which he is dealing, one is nevertheless grateful to him for incidental yet not negligible insights. Thus while one is at first a little doubtful about fitting the synoptic gospels into a scheme gained from an analysis of other ancient biographies, par-

ticularly those of philosophers, yet one is grateful for being reminded that in reading the gospels we need not look only for theological or philosophical influences and parallels, but that there is much of interest too in studying them as belonging to a literary genre common in antiquity.

Inevitably Mr. Talbert had to deal also with that enigmatic figure Apollonius of Tyana and his "biography" by Philostratus. Mr. Ewen Lyall Bowie returns to this subject in his contribution *Apollonius of Tyana: Tradition and Reality*. This is an excellent piece of work, soundly based on minute examination of the ancient evidence and on wide reading in the secondary literature dealing with it. It is accompanied by a very useful bibliography.

Signora Margherita Guarducci who has recently entertained and scandalized us by her brilliant exposé on the Fibula Praenestina in its relation to nineteenth century Roman antiquaries, scholars and forgers, offers us here an equally entertaining and erudite study in *Dal gioco letterale alla crittografia mistica*. It is written with all her customary verve and elegance; and it introduces us to a subject not widely known to historians or classical scholars; that of cryptography and in particular to the use of alphabetic (and other graphic) combinations in mystical and magical procedures.

Playing about with graphic signs seems to go back very far into ancient oriental history. Signora Guarducci cites from the Sumerian area cuneiform homophonies and acrostics belonging to the middle of the third millennium B.C.; and analogous phenomena from Egypt as early as the 14th century B.C., where hieroglyphic acrostics and even crossword combinations are found. Signora Guarducci gives us a great deal of fascinating and amusing material. Here we read about anagrams and palindromes, about magical squares (it is interesting to see how widespread these were; they are found over several centuries in places as diverse as Britain, Hungary, Italy, Mesopotamia), and about "Buchstabenorakel"; about *versus recurrentes*, and about *carmina figurata*; about graffiti and the use of whole or partial alphabets as votive offerings; about asigmatic poems and epics in which each of the twenty four books was written in such a way that the first book would not contain any alpha, the second book no beta, and so on through the alphabet, i.e. in such a way that each book would leave out the letter by which

its own number was designated; about alphabetic “games” found on some of the so-called *tabulae Iliacae*; about cruciverba (e.g. the letters of the words ΦΩΣ and ΖΩΗ arranged so as to form a cruciform figure); about the symbolic and sometimes sacral value attributed to certain letters, such as Δ, Ε, Θ, Υ, Ψ; and many other entertaining things. A particular virtue of this collection of interesting curiosities lies in the happy combination of plentiful literary and archaeological material, together with spirited criticism of wrongheaded interpretations.

Where one is offered so much it may seem greedy to wish for more. Yet, in a paper that is so rich in material about the symbolic use of alphabetic signs one may justly expect some discussion, and some illustrations, of *gematria*, the use of the numerical value of the letters making up a word for exegetical, homiletical, and mystical purposes. Yet, apart from the bare mention of the word *isopsephia* one looks in vain for any treatment of a method that was widespread among Jews and Christians, both those in the mainstream of the two religious traditions, and in the dark and sometimes unwholesome backwaters of sectarian and apocalyptic speculation in antiquity, the middle ages and down to modern times. Here is an example which I found in a 15th or 16th century Greek manuscript in St. Catherine’s Monastery on Mount Sinai, in an orthodox, virulently anti-Roman, polemical text: Λατεῖνος = 666 = the Antichrist (Cf. Hippol. *de anti-christo*, 50; and St. Irenaeus, *adv. haeres.* 5.30.3.)! Here is another one from antiquity (quoted by G. Scholem, EJ.7,369): Ἀβράξας = Μ(ε)Θραξ = 365, i.e. the number of days in a solar year. *Gematria* (from *geometria*) was much used, possibly as early as the eighth century B.C., in Mesopotamia, in the Greco-Roman period, and then by Jews and Christians and Gnostics, by Jewish kabbalists in the middle ages, by Christian monks and Jewish sectarians. Incredible ingenuity was expended on finding equations and analogies by use of the various forms of *gematria*.

It is in no spirit of churlish criticism that I offer some further comments:

The translation of the famous expression in Exodus 3,14 should not read “Io sono Colui che è” but “Io sono Colui che sono”; in discussing the expression “Alpha and Omega” for Christ (Revela-

tion 1,8) Signora Guarducci rightly cites Isaiah 41,4; 44,6; and 48,12. It would have contributed to the instruction of her readers if she had also discussed the isopsephic equation Alpha plus Omega = *peristera*, dove, found in St. Irenaeus and ascribed by him to the Gnostic Markos. (The numerical value of the Greek letters making up the word *peristera* is equal to that of the two letters alpha and omega = 801); Signora Guarducci brings together much interesting material both literary and epigraphical to illustrate the symbolic value of the Greek letter *theta*: as is known from a number of sources this letter symbolized, and was used to indicate, *thanatos*, death, e.g. in military lists, or judicially of criminals condemned to suffer capital punishment, and of gladiators; one ought to add to this the use of the symbol in medical prognosis (see Galen XVII.1,601 K.); and it would also have been useful to discuss in this context another dimension of the problem presented by the symbolical use of the letter *theta*: in some ancient Christian writers the letter *tau* symbolizes the cross (because its shape is that of the cross as used by the Romans); now, some of these writers rely in their interpretation on Ezekiel 9,4 where, in the Hebrew text, the letter *tau* is mentioned as a mark to be put on the foreheads of the men that are to be saved. This Hebrew letter, though by its position in the alphabetic series it corresponds to the Greek *tau* is yet phonetically the correlate of *theta*. Furthermore: In the ancient Hebrew alphabet it had the form of a cross (x). Some ancient writers, Jewish and, independently of them, Christian, use these facts and it seems clear that both Jews and Christians connect that verse with the symbolical value attached to the letters *theta* and *tau*.

I have mentioned these points not out of a peevish desire to be critical, but on the contrary, because this is a rich and enlightening paper, one from which one reader at least has gained not only much valuable instruction but also much uncovenanted entertainment. And where so much is given the appetite grows with the eating.

The first part of volume 17 contains a number of interesting papers on various aspects of the cults of Jupiter, Juno, Minerva, Mars and other divinities. There is much here that will enlighten many readers about Quirinus and the *dei penates*, about Ceres and Janus and Tellus-Terra Mater. I hope it will not be thought invidious if I single out three papers for especial mention:

Jean-Louis Girard, *Domitien et Minerve: une préférence impériale* (Domitian wants to create a particular kind of image of himself: ‘par sa référence à la sagesse guerrière, il se veut le prince des décisions foudroyantes et des desseins longuement mûris. Troisième empereur flavien, comme Minerve est la troisième dans la triade capitoline...fondateur des jeux capitolins, auteur de poèmes sur les combats de Judée et du Capitole, il se proclame le protecteur des lettres et des arts...il tente d’assurer à une dynastie dont il ne peut prévoir qu’il sera le dernier représentant un patronage...prestigieux...Aucune divinité ne pouvait offrir à Domitien autant de traits propres à illustrer les aspects de son personnage et les ambitions de son règne que Minerve lui en offrait.’’)

Ileana Chirassi Colombo: *Funzioni politiche ed implicazioni culturali nell’ideologia religiosa di Ceres nell’impero romano* (a paper on the interaction of the spheres of the political and the sacral).

Iiro Kajanto: *Fortuna* (on the origins of the Fortuna cult, on the epithets of Fortuna, on the iconography, and on Fortuna in literature, pagan and Christian).

All these volumes are exceptionally well printed and produced. They contain helpful illustrations, photographs, maps and bibliographies.

Finally, it may seem ungracious of a reviewer to mention this, but it should not be left unsaid: the price of every one of these volumes is such that one cannot imagine that many scholars will be able to afford them. This is a pity.

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## PROPHECY

(*Review article*)

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Die Georg-Fohrer Festschrift, deren Thema Prophetie ist, hat zwar einen verhältnismässig bescheidenen Umfang (202 Seiten), doch spiegelt sie sowohl die Vielseitigkeit des Jubilars wieder als auch die so vielschichtigen und vielgestaffelten Forschungssysteme und Methoden, mit denen man heutzutage das Problem Prophetie, prophetische Literatur, zu bewältigen versucht. Die religionswissenschaftliche Methode ist in den Beiträgen des französischen Gelehrten E. Jacob: "La dimension du prophétisme d'après Martin Buber et Abraham Heschel" (S. 26-34) und des amerikanischen Gelehrten M. J. Buss: "The social psychology of prophecy" (S. 1-11) vertreten; die historische — in den Beiträgen des italienischen Forschers J. A. Soggin: "Hosea und die Aussenpolitik Israels" (S. 131-136) und des israelischen Historikers A. Malamat: "A Mari prophecy and Nathan's dynastic Oracle" (S. 68-82), die exegetisch philologische — in den meisterhaften Abhandlungen der beiden englischen Alttestamentler J. A. Emerton: "Notes on two verses in Isaiah 26:16 and 66:17" (S. 12-25), und W. McKane: "בָּשָׁר in Jeremiah 23:33-40" (S. 35-54), sowie des schweizer Altmeisters J. J. Stamm: "Der Name des Propheten Amos und sein sprachlicher Hintergrund" (S. 137-142). Zu dieser Kategorie ist auch die Studie des holländischen Forschers A. S. van der Woude: "Seid nicht wie eure Väter! Bemerkungen zu Sacharja 1:5 und seinem Kontext" (S. 163-173) zu zählen. Die literaturkritischen Beiträge sind natürllicherweise das Rückgrat des Bandes mit sieben beachtenswerten Arbeiten: R. Martin-Achard: "Esaïe 47 et la tradition prophétique sur Babylone" (S. 83-105), A. Marx: "A propos des doublets du livre de Jérémie. Réflexions sur la formation d'un livre prophétique" (S. 106-120), I. Sturdy: "The authorship of the prose sermons of Jeremiah" (S. 143-150), G. Wanke: "Jeremias Besuch beim Töpfer" (S. 151-162) und last not least W. Zimmerli: "Das

Phänomen der Fortschreibung im Buche Ezechiel” (S. 174-191) — ein Versuch der Systematisierung der Glossen, Interpretationen und Erweiterungen der Worte Ezechiels durch seine Schule, wie Zimmerli den Sachverhalt in seinem monumentalen Kommentar ausführlich zu beweisen versucht. Der Beitrag des Kölner Judäisten J. Maier: “Die Hofanlagen im Tempel — Entwurf des Ezechiel im Licht der Tempelrolle von Qumran” (S. 55-67) stellt den ersten originellen Versuch dar, den Tempelentwurf Ezechiels mit dem der Tempelrolle von Qumran zu vergleichen. Zuletzt sei die methodologische Studie des tschechisch-amerikanischen Orientalisten S. Segert erwähnt, im Gefolge des modernen literarischen Strukturalismus: “Syntax and Style in the Book of Jonah. Six simple approaches to their analysis” (S. 121-130).

In dieser kurzen Besprechung kann ich nur auf einige der so vielen Probleme eingehen, die in den diversen Beiträgen behandelt werden. Beginnen wir mit dem religionsgeschichtlichen Aspekt, der von Jacob und Buss angeschnitten wurde. Jacob legt eine scharfumrissene Skizze vor, wo er die Buber'sche mit der Heschel'schen Prophetologie vergleicht; dies sind die beiden einflussreichsten jüdischen Denker um die Mitte dieses Jahrhunderts, wobei Buber umstritten als die bedeutendere Persönlichkeit anzusprechen ist sowohl als Bibelforscher wie auch als Philosoph. Doch der Einfluss Heschels auf die religiös-konservative Bewegung des amerikanischen Judentums ist überhaupt nicht abzumessen; er ist *der* Theologe dieser so beachtenswerten Bewegung. Heschels Prophetologie liegt in einem deutschen Band vor, *Die Prophetie* (Krakow 1936), und in der erweiterten englischen Übersetzung: *The Prophets* (New York and Evanston, 1962).<sup>2</sup> Während seine *Prophetie* in erster Linie aus einer polemischen Haltung hervorgegangen ist, handelt sich's bei Bubers Werk *Der Glaube der Propheten* (1940, 1942, 1949, 150) um die Fortführung der Linien, die sich in seinem ersten umfassenden biblischen Werk *Königtum Gottes* (1936) abzeichnen. Eine Asymmetrie beim Vergleich dieser beiden Werke fällt dabei sofort ins Auge: Heschels Anschauung der Prophetie als Sympathieerscheinung stellt im Grunde genommen eine theologische Transformation der soziopsychologischen Sympathietheorie Max Schelers dar mit einem leichten Anflug der dialogischen Philosophie Bubers selbst.<sup>3</sup> Diese Theorie, die sich auf die Analyse der prophetischen Erfah-

rung, des prophetischen Bewusstseins, beschränkt, war als Antithese zu der so weit verbreiteten Ekstasentheorie G. Hölschers gedacht. Doch Bubers Interesse beschränkte sich *ausschliesslich* auf die geschichtlich-sozialen *Inhalte* der prophetischen Sendung, wie der Titel seines Werkes *Der Glaube der Propheten* deutlich macht. Treffend umschreibt Jacob die Buber'sche Konzeption des Propheten als Vermittler des Wortes Gottes: "Dieu se manifeste ensuite en s'adressant à des individus particuliers qui doivent se faire auprès du peuple les interprètes de cette parole" (S. 28). In totaler Opposition zur neueren Forschung verlegt Buber die Anfänge der Prophe-  
tie auf die Patriarchenperiode und zieht eine grosse Linie, die von Abraham über Moses und Samuel die klassischen Propheten erreicht; das gemeinsame all dieser Gestalten ist die Aufforderung an den Menschen, sich für das Wort Gottes zu entscheiden, sich seiner Führung abstrichlos hinzugeben, wie aus der Sage vom Opfergang Isaaks schon ersichtlich ist. Diese Aufforderung an das Entscheidungsvermögen des Menschen wird durch die Apokalyptik mit ihrem anthropologischen und geschichtlichen Determinismus — wie Buber festzustellen glaubte — unmöglich gemacht. Bubers Konzeption der Propheten als Vertreter des religiösen Realismus ist die Grundlage seiner Skizze der biblischen Eschatologie, wobei der Gesalbte niemals als mythologische oder himmlische Endzeitsfigur sondern als der erwartete davidische König gezeichnet wurde, der sich durch theopolitische Erwägungen bestimmen lässt in seiner Person als Statthalter Gottes, als Verwirklicher des Göttlichen Wortes im politischen und gesellschaftlichen Bereich. Buber hat sich nie und niemals auch nur andeutungsweise auf die psychologisierenden Deutungsversuche des prophetischen Erlebnisses eingelassen, zumal er die strukturelle Besonderheit des religiösen insbesondere des prophetischen Erlebnisses verleugnete. Mehr jedoch, in seinem Denken hat der Begriff Erlebniss als solcher keinen Platz, da es nämlich nur *eine* authentische Beziehung gibt, nämlich die Ich-Du Beziehung, die die Ganzheit des Menschen erfordert in seinem Verhältnis zu Gott als auch zum Mitmenschen. Die Variationen dieser dialogischen Grundbeziehung sind in seinem Frühwerk *Ich und Du* gezeichnet.<sup>4</sup> Die Sympathietheorie Heschel's andererseits, umschreibt das prophetische Bewusstsein als ein stetiges Ausgerichtetsein auf den göttlichen Pathos, als ein Mitleiden und Mit-

handeln mit Gott. Wenn ich diese Theorie ablehne, so geschieht das nicht aus den semantischen Erwägungen heraus die Jacob anführt, indem er den griechischen Begriff Sympathie durch die beiden hebräischen Grundworte **דעתה** und **קנאה** ersetzen will. In erster Linie ergibt sich dies aus der Erkenntnis, dass hiermit die steile Spannung zwischen der menschlich-prophetischen und der göttlichen Haltung verwischt wird — eine Spannung von der die prophetische Literatur viel zu berichten weiß. Außerdem sei betont, dass Heschel hiermit die Prophetie auf die theologisch-spiritualistische Begriffswelt einschränkt, wogegen der Schwerpunkt dieses Phänomens in der konkreten politisch-sozialen Kritik und Handlungsweise liegt.<sup>5</sup>

Hiermit sind wir am Beitrag des amerikanischen Gelehrten Buss angelangt, der die Prophetie von sozialpsychologischen Kategorien her verstehen möchte. Er führt beispielsweise zwei Grundkategorien an, nämlich die Kategorie der Rolle, d.h. die von der Gesellschaft erwartete Rolle, die eine Person zu spielen hat, als auch die Kategorie der Selbstheit (selfhood) im Sinne von Piaget & Inhelder.<sup>6</sup> Diese Kategorie ist nur im gesellschaftlichen Kontext erfassbar, denn nicht ein selbstkonzentriertes Individuum hat Selbstheit sondern nur ein solches das sich *dezentralisiert* hat, das sich selbst transzendent, das sein Orientierungszentrum ausserhalb seines selbst zu finden imstande ist. Was die Propheten betrifft, so ist ihre anfängliche Rolle auf die Ganzheit der Gesellschaft ausgerichtet. Erst mit dem Wachsen der Gesellschaft, mit deren Differenzierungen, beginnt sich diese Rolle zu spezialisieren. Die Patriarchen Moses & Samuel wurden mit priesterlichen, seherischen, kultischen Funktionen bedacht, — Moses zeichnet sich u.a. auch als Gesetzgeber in der Tradition ab. Diese Situation soll sich erst mit der josianischen Reform geändert haben, in deren Verlauf sich die priesterlich-kultischen Funktionen vom Propheten abspalteten, und der Prophet sich als Empfänger von transräumlich-zeitlichen Mitteilungen herauzkristallisierte. Der Inhalt dieser Mitteilungen sei die Enthüllung des Bösen u.s.w. und dessen Beseitigung gewesen. Diese Konfrontation mit den realen Bedingungen habe immer ein Moment der Unsicherheit und Überraschung ausgelöst, so dass sich Buss zu der paradoxen Feststellung versteigt: “the role expectation for prophecy is the presentation of a word that cannot spe-

cifically be anticipated" (S. 7). Was die prophetische Selbsttranszendenz betrifft, so offenbare sie sich in der Erfahrungsweise als Besessenheit und in ihren Inhalten als Gesellschaftskritik. Zwei kurze kritische Bemerkungen seien hier angebracht. Was die gesellschaftliche Rolle des Propheten betrifft, so sind die historischen Differenzierungsprozesse nach völlig andern Linien verlaufen, wie sie Buss darzustellen versucht. In diesem Zusammenhang möchte ich auf meine Ausführungen hinweisen in meinem hebräischen Werk *Ancient Prophecy in Israel* (1972, Magnes Press Jerusalem). Ausserdem glaube ich, dass diese Prozesse schwerlich mit Allgemeinheiten wie "primitive und differenzierte" Verhältnisse umschrieben werden können, sondern nur auf Grund einer eingehenden historisch-philologischen Analyse der einschlägigen Texte. Was die Selbstheit des Propheten betrifft, so hat sie wahrlich nichts mit dem landläufigen Begriff der Besessenheit zu tun, wie Heschel in seinem oben erwähnten Werk überzeugend darlegte. Ausserdem sollte doch jede Methode, in diesem Falle die sozial-psychologische, ihre eigenen empirischen Grenzen kennen und sich nicht dazu versteigen, die religiöse Wirklichkeit mit deren irrationalen und metaphysischen Elementen in die empirische Begriffswelt völlig aufgehen zu lassen. Die Transzendenz an sich kann nur in ihren Erscheinungsformen doch nicht ihrem inneren Wesen nach in psychsoziologischen Kategorien umschrieben werden.

Jetzt noch einiges zu den literarisch-exegetischen Studien des obigen Bandes: Ich meine die Jeremiastudien, die G. Wanke und John V.M. Sturdy vorgelegt haben. Sturdy stellt fest, dass die meisten Parallelen zwischen Jeremiah und Deuteronomium um Deut. 28 kreisen. Aufgrund einer sehr eingehenden und sophistizierten Vergleichsanalyse kommt er zum Ergebnis, die Redaktion der Prosa reden sei nicht das Werk des Deuteronomisten oder dessen Schule, wie allgemein angenommen wird, sondern der Schüler Jeremiahs — nicht derer die im babylonischen Exils lebten sondern derer die im Lande Israel zurückgeblieben seien. Seine These gründet auf dem doppelten Gegensatz zwischen Jeremiah und dem Deuteronomium: 1) Jeremiah 7 und 26 verhalte sich ablehnend gegenüber der deuteronomistischen Anschauung von der Kultzentralisierung (Deut. 12 ), da hier die schutzbringende Heiligkeit des Tempels in Frage gestellt werde. 2) Die zurückhaltende ja ableh-

nende Haltung des Deuteronomiums dem Königtum gegenüber (Dt. 17:14-20) widerspreche der jeremianischen Anerkennung des davidischen Königshauses, die selbst seine Unheilsweissagungen an die Könige Judas durchdringt (Jer. 23:5-6). Diese Folgerung scheint mir überzeugend zu sein: die Redaktion der jeremianischen Prosareden hat in der Tat sehr wenig mit dem Deuteronomisten zu tun. Doch die Argumentation des Verfassers sollte an einigen sehr entscheidenden Punkten revidiert werden: Was die Kapitel 7 und 26 betrifft, so wird hier mit keinem Worte von der Kultzentralisierung geredet. Was hier bekämpft wird, dies ist der volkstümliche (Aber-)glaube, dass die Gegenwart Gottes den Tempel vor Zerstörung schütze. Was die stylistischen Affinitäten zwischen Jeremiah und Deuteronomium betrifft, so beziehen sich diese unterschiedslos sowohl auf die Prosareden als auf die poetischen Partien des Buches Jeremiah, wie aus der erschöpfenden Zusammenstellung Y. Kaufmanns ersichtlich ist.<sup>7</sup> Es wäre überhaupt von Nutzen, wenn man sich um die Erkenntnisse dieses bedeutenden Forschers mehr kümmern würde. Die ganze Problematik Jeremiah-Deuteronomium sollte von diesem Aspekt her neu aufgegriffen werden. Was die Datierung des Deuteronomiums selbst betrifft, so sollte man doch nie vergessen, dass die ganze dortige Gesetzgebung *ausnahmslos* das prämonarchische Stämmesystem wiederspiegelt, ohne auch nur die leisesten Spuren der königlichen Gesetzgebung aufzuweisen.<sup>8</sup>

Dies führt uns zur motivkritischen Analyse Günter Wanke's über Jeremiah's Besuch beim Töpfer. Der Ausgangspunkt seiner Untersuchung sind Jes. 29:15-16; 45:9-10; 64:7-8, wo das Motiv Töpfer-Ton die Souveränität des göttlichen Handelns veranschaulicht. Aufgrund der Voraussetzung, dass der Adressat Jeremiah's dieses Gleichnis kenne, argumentiert Wanke, dass Jer. 18:1-6 der Urtext sei. Die Verse 7-12 seien erklärende Erweiterung — parallel zu anderen jeremianischen Texten über symbolische Handlungen, die als Selbstberichte von unheilverkündender Funktion zu erklären seien (Jer. 13:1-11; 16:1-9; 19:1-2, 10-11<sup>a</sup>). Doch scheint es mir äusserst zweifelhaft, ob Vss. 7-12 von 1-6 so einfach abgeschnitten werden können, ohne den Text zu banalisieren und ihn seines Charakters als prophetische Rede gänzlich zu berauben. Man soll sich doch der Tatsache nicht verschliessen, dass hier das Töpfermotiv in einer ganz einzigartigen Weise verwendet wird: es ist weder Un-

heilswort noch Drohwort sondern belehrende Allegorie, die die Entscheidungsfreiheit des *Menschen* zu betonen beabsichtigt — ein Thema das der Kern der Jeremianischen Verkündung ist. Mit Recht betont Marx in seinem oben erwähnten Beitrag, dass viele der Dubletten bei Jeremiah aus ihren verschiedenen Zusammenhängen zu erklären seien; so sollte man auch etwas vorsichtiger mit den Hypothesen umgehen, die viele der textuellen Schwierigkeiten mit willkürlichen Entwicklungs- oder Übermalungstheorien des von Forscher zu Forscher verschieden konzipierten “Urtextes” bewältigen wollen.

Dies seien nur wenige Bemerkungen zu einem sehr geistreichen, anregenden — wenn auch oft zum Widerspruch herausfordernden — Band. Zugleich erlaube ich mir, dem Jubilar noch viele Jahre schöpferischen Schaffens inmitten Jerusalems, der Königsstadt Davids und seiner Nachkommen, zu wünschen!

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<sup>1</sup> J. A. Emerton (ed.), *Prophecy*, Essays presented to Georg Fohrer on his sixtieth birthday, 6 September 1980, Berlin-New York, Walter de Gruyter, 1980.

<sup>2</sup> Eine sehr bemerkenswerte originelle Synthese zwischen der Heschel'schen und der Buber'schen Prophetologie hat der jüdische Forscher und Denker A. Neher vorgelegt; vgl. *L'Essence du Prophétisme*, 1955, *Amos*, 1950, *Jérémie* 1960.

<sup>3</sup> Vgl. meine Studie *Prophecy and Sympathy* (hebr.), in: *Bible Studies*, Y. M. Grintz in Memoriam, Te'uda Vol. II, The Chaim Rosenberg School of Jewish Studies Research Series, Tel Aviv University, 1982, pp. 17-36.

<sup>4</sup> Vgl. meine Studie *Buber and Modern Jewish Bible Research* (hebr.), in: *Martin Buber, a Centenary volume*, Ben-Gurion University of Be'er Sheva, 1982, 157-196.

<sup>5</sup> Vgl. meine Ausführungen *Prophétie und Sympathie*, Universität Tel-Aviv (im Druck).

<sup>6</sup> J. Piaget and B. Inhelder, *The Psychology of the Child*, 1949, 94f.

<sup>7</sup> Y. Kaufmann, *History of Israel's Religion* (hebr.), Vol. III, S. 613-625. Dies ist eine Zusammenstellung von parallelen Versen und stylistischen Wendungen, die jedem Alttestamentler zugänglich ist, selbst wenn er das nachbiblische und besonders das moderne Hebräisch nicht beherrscht.

<sup>8</sup> Vgl. meine Studie “The problem of Cult centralization in Israel” (hebr.), *Tarbitz*, 29, 1958, 138-154.

## CHANGE AND PROGRESS IN UNDERSTANDING CHINESE RELIGION\*

(*Review article*)

T. H. BARRETT

In the West, and especially in North America, the 1960s, the decade in which I myself reached university, witnessed the start of a remarkable upsurge of interest in the religions and philosophies of the East. The influence of this unforeseen extension of religious pluralism upon the religious life of the United States has been explored to some extent already by Harvey Cox<sup>1</sup>, but its wider effects may be traced much further than the world of the exotic imported cults themselves. In academic circles, where the enthusiasms of youth confront the requirements of scholarship, a somewhat more pallid reflection of the change in society at large may be seen in the expansion since that decade of the teaching of Eastern thought and Eastern religion. In its turn, one effect of this expansion has been the establishment of the study of Chinese religion as a recognized area of religious studies and of sinology. This development may be measured by a number of indicators: the creation of a Society for the Study of Chinese Religions, which "is formally related to the Association of Asian Studies as an "Affiliated Group", and constitutes the "Chinese Religions Group" of the American Academy of Religion"<sup>2</sup>; the production of bibliographies of past scholarship<sup>3</sup>; the appearance of review articles surveying new developments<sup>4</sup>; and the translation into English from other European languages of important writings in the field dating from the first half of the century.

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\* Apropos of: Richard Wilhelm (tr. Irene Eber), *Lectures on the I Ching, Constancy and Change* (Bollingen Series XIX:2, Princeton University Press, 1979), xxiii + 187 pp., \$9.75, and Iulian Konstantinovich Shchutskii (tr. William L. Macdonald and Tsuyoshi Hasegawa with Hellmut Wilhelm), *Researches on the I Ching* (Bollingen Series LXII:2, Princeton University Press, 1979), lxvi + 257 pp., \$12.50.

The origins of this last practice may be taken back to as early as 1951, when the first English edition of Max Weber, *The Religion of China*, translated and edited by Hans H. Gerth, was published by the Free Press in Glencoe, Illinois. But despite the addition of a thirty-one page introduction by C. K. Yang to the 1964 edition, bringing it closer in format to the translations now appearing, this volume may perhaps best be seen as marking a stage in the development of sociology rather than of the study of Chinese religion as such. Both sociological and sinological concerns are prominent in Maurice Freedman's 1975 translation of Marcel Granet's early work on Chinese religion<sup>5</sup>. Here, however, Freedman's statement that the "decision to undertake the translation was made as a result of a few week's work in Paris towards the end of 1972 when I was collecting material upon Granet in connexion with a study of the Western perception of Chinese religion"<sup>6</sup>, and some more extended remarks in an earlier publication which attempted to survey the contributions of pioneering figures like Granet and de Groot<sup>7</sup>, show that a close relationship existed for Freedman between the progress of his own thinking about China and the translation of a book already half a century old. Thus his volume differs markedly from earlier translations of books by Granet produced during his lifetime, where no attempt was made to add introductory material commenting on the original<sup>8</sup>. Implicit in Freedman's introductory essay (and quite explicit in his earlier paper) is a desire to take stock, to place Granet in the context of his own times so as better to be able to understand the distance between his perceptions and contemporary Western thinking on Chinese religion.

Frank Kierman Jr.'s translation of the writings of Henri Maspero on Taoism and Chinese religion, for which I was asked to provide an introduction, was prompted by a more immediate need: that of presenting to college students not at home in the French language a classic study frequently cited in later scholarship<sup>9</sup>. This work formed a natural sequel to Kierman's earlier translation of Maspero's writings on early China, which contains a substantial introduction by D. C. Twitchett<sup>10</sup>. Though not the product of quite the same process of reexamination that inspired Freedman's work, Twitchett's introduction also characterizes Maspero as a man of his times and provides a clear and useful outline of the changes that

have taken place in our understanding of early China since those times. The introduction to Kierman's translation of Maspero's writings on Taoism accordingly attempts a similar survey of developments in Taoist studies.

Richard Wilhelm died in 1930, long before Granet and Maspero. In 1951 it was possible for C. G. Jung and Cary F. Baynes to write the "Foreword" and the "Translator's Note" respectively to the latter's translation of Wilhelm's German rendering of the *I Ching* without making any reference to differences between Wilhelm's understanding of the *I Ching* and interpretations current at the time of publication<sup>11</sup>. Irene Eber, however, supplies with her translation of some essays on the *I Ching* by Wilhelm dating from the late 1920s an introduction of fifteen pages much more like those prefacing the Granet and Maspero volumes; one notes also the explanation in the "Translator's Preface" (p. vii) that the translation was first undertaken for the benefit of fellow graduate students who did not know German well. The introduction itself contains, after some preliminary remarks, a brief but informative sketch of Wilhelm's life, noting especially the influence upon him of Lao Nai-hsüan and C. G. Jung. His position on the relationship between Chinese and Western culture, a sort of affirmation of pluralism coupled with a rejection of cosmopolitanism, is then compared with that of Joseph R. Levenson (1920-1969). Although the comparison is not inappropriate, the differences between the two men are also worth observing. Levenson, writing out of a very different background and set of circumstances, has much less of the self-assured tone of Wilhelm, and one wonders whether he would have expressed himself entirely happy with the results of Wilhelm's elevation of the *I Ching* to the status of a world classic<sup>12</sup>.

But a more serious problem emerges when Eber reaches her account of scholarship on the *I Ching* since Wilhelm's time. For in the first paragraph of this outline (p. xxi) we read "Among recent archaeological finds, hitherto unknown portions of *I Ching* materials have come to light". These materials, recovered from a tomb of the second century B.C. at Ma-wang-tui, near Ch'ang-sha, are of such importance that we would appear to be trembling on the brink of a complete revolution in our understanding of how the present text of the classic came into being<sup>13</sup>. A full edition and study of the *I Ching*

finds has not yet appeared, but when this does happen it will be just one part of a process of reassessing early China as a result of a startling series of recent archaeological discoveries, many of which serve to provide a much broader context in which to see the emergence of the *I Ching* as a classic than has hitherto been possible<sup>14</sup>. Eber's remark (p. xxii) that "Western scholarship on the *I Ching* has not been plentiful" no longer holds good, now that the open-minded young people of a decade ago have become the struggling junior academics of today. For example after the appearance of her translation the journal *Philosophy East and West* published an article on the *I Ching* in each of its quarterly issues from October, 1979, to October, 1980, except for the third quarter of 1980, in which however such an article did appear in the *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*<sup>15</sup>. Yet in so far as any of these articles relate to the early history of the *I Ching* they are all liable to be instantly vitiated by the publication of the results of research into these new sources.

But of course many of them do not concern themselves with history, and in a sense Wilhelm was as little concerned with history as it is possible to be. As Eber makes admirably clear, he was much more interested in the living tradition of the *I Ching*, which he saw as just as important to the West as to China. His meditations on its meaning, though exemplifying the spirit of the late traditional Chinese approach to the text, are not part of an attempt to understand Chinese thinking, but rather an attempt to participate in such thinking, not necessarily with a direct reference to China at all. It follows that if there have been advances in this direction since Wilhelm's day they have nothing to do with the study of Chinese religion<sup>16</sup>. Since Eber does not make this consequence explicit, but rounds off her introduction with a paragraph apiece on revisionist Chinese scholarship of the twenties and thirties, Hellmut Wilhelm and C. G. Jung, plus a quotation from the poet T'ao Yüan-ming, the difference in approach between this volume of translation and those already discussed above is somewhat obscured by the similarity in format. Of course Eber's work has, and will have, its own uses, not only to those of the same mind as Richard Wilhelm, but also to anyone interested in the history of sinology. But what does need to be stressed is that though at first glance this book would ap-

pear to provide material for taking stock of our progress in understanding Chinese religion by measuring our perception against his, in fact Wilhelm was engaged in an exercise which makes such comparison impossible.

A more convenient base-line to take might be the work of Iulian K. Shchutskii (1897-1937), who awards full marks to Wilhelm (p. 224) for his "interpretative translation from the point of view of the present oral tradition", but otherwise quotes with approval Alfred Forke's remark that Wilhelm "lets go too freely the rein of his fantasy" (p. 45). Though Shchutskii's writings show him to have something of a free spirit himself—as it turned out, far too free a spirit to be allowed to remain alive in Stalinist Russia—his aims and methods were very much the same as the majority of academic students of Chinese religion then and now. His work on the *I Ching*, as translated into English, does nonetheless constitute something of an anomaly. The original was completed in 1935, but circumstances did not permit its publication in Russia until 1960. Thus despite a lengthy and sympathetic review by Paul Demiéville, published in 1963<sup>17</sup>, it can hardly be said to have been regarded in its day as a recognized milestone in early twentieth century sinology. Partly as a result of this slow progress to recognition the names of no less than half a dozen other scholars appear together with Shchutskii's on this volume. Not only has the process of translation involved the work of three professors; the final result is preceded by prefatory material from three separate hands: an "Introduction to the English Edition" (pp. vii-xlviii) by Gerald W. Swanson, an "Introduction to the Russian Edition" (pp. xlxi-lxiv) by N. I. Konrad and a "Biographical Sketch" (pp. lxv-lxvi) by N. A. Petrov. Shchutskii's text itself, together with bibliography and index, does not amount to four times this length. But there is little duplication of effort between these introductions; for example both Swanson and Konrad provide material to supplement Petrov's sketch, but the former is naturally more frank concerning the brutal and tragic circumstances of Shchutskii's death.

Konrad is also distinctly summary in dealing with research in the *I Ching* between Shchutskii's time ad his own: he simply adds to Shchutskii's bibliography some forty or so references, minus any comment. Swanson is much more conscientious, mentioning less

than a dozen of the most useful studies, but together with his own assessment of their value. His “Appraisal of Shchutskii’s work” (pp. x-xxxvi) also brings to bear later (and earlier) scholarship wherever he feels that it has anything of significance to add to Shchutskii’s conclusions. He does not, however, say anything about the discovery at Ma-wang-tui or its implications. For both Swanson and Konrad are as much exercised to explain Shchutskii’s neglect of a great deal of well-known earlier scholarship on the *I Ching* as to update his work. This neglect does not extend to Western scholarship—Shchutskii has a pleasantly wicked survey of the shortcomings of his predecessors in his first chapter—but rather applies to the majority of the most highly regarded works on the *I Ching* written during the Ch’ing dynasty (1644-1911). Konrad finds a sound political reason for this, and concurs in Shchutskii’s omission; Swanson, unconvinced in any case that Konrad has divined Shchutskii’s motives correctly, rectifies it by including a survey of the most eminent Ch’ing *I Ching* scholars and their publications. Swanson himself concludes (p. xlii) that Shchutskii narrowed the scope of his selection of Ch’ing *I Ching* studies so as to treat only scholarship congenial to his criticisms of the accepted attribution of the text to Confucius<sup>18</sup>.

Though this would seem true enough, one can entirely sympathise with Shchutskii. He was, in fact, well aware (as p. 196 makes clear) that the *Ssu-k’u ch’uan-shu tsung-mu*, a standard bibliography of earlier Chinese literature compiled in the late eighteenth century, already listed “about five hundred works devoted in one way or another to the *Book of Changes*”, and that even this number excluded works written by Taoists and by scholars in Japan. Faced with the prospect of having to trudge through this (for the most part) distinctly arid terrain, Shchutskii seems to have decided instead to triangulate from a limited number of salient points, mostly on the periphery of his chosen territory<sup>19</sup>. For the purposes of his own translation in particular he explicitly states (p. 225) that he bases his understanding on the commentaries of Wang Pi (226-249), the Japanese Itō Tōgai (1670-1736), and the Buddhist referred to by him as “Wan I (1598-1654)”.

Now these choices are noted by both Swanson and Konrad (pp. xxxi, lviii). The latter construes them as a selection of one Taoist,

one Confucian and one Buddhist, and so is obliged to devote a couple of pages to advancing possible reasons for the choice of a Japanese Confucian rather than a recognized Chinese figure. But if I have guessed Shchutskii's reactions to the superabundance of traditional *I Ching* studies correctly, he may rather have been unconsciously or consciously looking, *inter alia*, for commentators on the edge of that tradition. Wang Pi, it must be said, certainly became central to the tradition as it developed, but in his time, as initiator of the philosophical approach to understanding the *I Ching*, he marked a very sharp break with a line of commentators stretching back through the Han dynasty to the period when the text was first accepted as a classic<sup>20</sup>. And Itō Tōgai, whose obvious appeal to Shchutskii was that he was the first commentator not to treat the various layers of the text as a monolithic unity, was undoubtedly a Confucian, but one so far removed both physically and mentally from Chinese preconceptions as to be almost an outside critic. Finally "Wan I", the first commentator to attempt a translation not simply into another language but into the terminology of another system of thought, adopts such an unorthodox approach to the text that one fears he may have actually led Shchutskii (who was certainly deluded as to the correct pronunciation of his name) rather far astray.

For neither Konrad nor Swanson appear to have pinned down the identity of this most mysterious member of Shchutskii's trinity. Swanson's ignorance is mildly surprising, since "Wan I" had not escaped the indefatigable erudition of Demiéville, in whose review he stands exposed as none other than the great Buddhist master Ou-i Chih-hsü (1599-1655)<sup>21</sup>. Even Demiéville seems not to have consulted any actual copy of Chih-hsü's work, the *Chou-i ch'an-chieh*<sup>22</sup>, since he is content to repeat the conflicting bibliographical information on it found in reference works. Though a complete account of the editions of the *Chou-i ch'an-chieh* would be out of place here, it is worth noting that it was completed in two stages (in 1641 and 1645)<sup>23</sup>, that it was included in the supplement to the seventeenth-century "Chia-hsing" (or "Ching-shan") edition of the Buddhist canon, and that it is available as part of a series of photolithographic reproductions of that canon<sup>24</sup>. Moreover, a reading of the *Chou-i ch'an-chieh* does not by any means justify

Shchutskii's claim (p. 225) that "Buddhist terminology, in view of its great precision and mastery within European Buddhological literature and Japanese Buddhological lexicography, makes possible an understanding of Wan I's commentary without allowing the slightest ambiguity".

For example, to judge by the translation of a portion of Chih-hsü's remarks on pp. 205-6, Shchutskii has misconstrued references in his text to the "two vehicles" as meaning "Hinayana and Mahayana". This is one possible value of the term, but here the context shows that it indicates the vehicles of the *śrāvaka* and *pratyekabuddha*, and so stands for the less spiritually advanced forms of Buddhism taken as a whole. But the ambiguities in the text are not simply confined to one or two points of terminology; rather, they permeate the work from beginning to end. Chih-hsü, despite his title, does not simply "translate" the *I Ching* into the terminology of Ch'an (Zen)—a task which would scarcely have been possible in terms of Ch'an as it had been understood in earlier times in China. For in his attitude towards Buddhist doctrine he was a thoroughgoing syncretist, espousing a variety of Ch'an less concerned with the paradoxes of the great Chinese patriarchs and easier to reconcile with the doctrines of other schools. Hence in his commentary we find not one consistent scheme of interpretation linking the *I Ching* with a particular system of Buddhist thought but a confusing mixture of standard Buddhist terminology with technical terms drawn from T'ien-t'ai, Hua-yen or other sources peculiar to specific Chinese schools of Buddhism.

Furthermore his work is not even consistently Buddhist: Shchutskii is closer to the mark on p. 198, when he describes him as having produced "a synthesis of the Sung school and Buddhism", and on p. 223, when he speaks of him having come "to recognize the *Book of Changes* as a philosophical text, which in the skilful hands of the adept could play a role in the introduction to Buddhist philosophy". Even this last sentence is not entirely correct: Chih-hsü does speak in his preface of aiming to lead Confucians to understand Ch'an, but equally declares that he is using Ch'an to approach Confucianism<sup>26</sup>. He is not simply using a Confucian text as a primer for illustrating Ch'an ideas; rather he sees the *I Ching* as a manifestation of exactly the same thing as Buddhism, though a

manifestation of an inferior sort<sup>27</sup>. He is not simply “writing in the terms and expressions of Buddhist philosophy” but rather finding Buddhist as well as Confucian meanings to the text itself, like a Christian reading Vergil’s poetry as both a pagan document and an adumbration of the gospel of his own religion. For these reasons I find it impossible to share “a confidence in the objective correctness of the interpretation” which Shchutskii himself claims (p. 225) that he arrived at through Chih-hsü’s commentary.

I do so with regret. One can readily understand the appeal that the idiosyncratic and wide-ranging Chih-hsü had to a free spirit like Shchutskii, and the very least that a reader will bring away from this book is a deep respect for the boldness and imagination of Shchutskii’s attempts to solve the problems he faced. But the failures of our predecessors present a picture just as instructive as their successes, and much more sobering. Clearly Shchutskii was forced to bite off much more than he could chew, though he could hardly have done otherwise, as a pioneering scholar making a serious attempt to struggle with a whole tradition of Far Eastern scholarship almost entirely ignored by the few Westerners to have preceded him in his *I Ching* studies. Still, he produced extraordinarily good results, and one wonders whether all the changes since his time may really be counted as progress.

For though I have found it convenient to consider his work in conjunction with a number of translations sharing a similar format, it must be conceded that grouping them together as studies of Chinese religion is in some ways an arbitrary expedient. Few of the translators and writers of introductions involved would probably claim to be “experts on Chinese religion”, but rather sociologists, historians or even philosophers, whilst men of Shchutskii’s generation at any rate would not have been unhappy with the yet broader designation of sinologist. Ironically, however, the increased openness towards Chinese religion of recent years has been accompanied by, and even accelerated, an increase in specialization consequent upon the establishment of a newly recognized division of academic territory. This narrowing of focus inevitably involves a tendency to constrict the range of effort required of us if we are in any sense to understand the totality of Chinese civilization. Translations of outdated scholarship can only have a limited use, and if introduced

without warning into undergraduate reading lists they may be worse than useless, serving only to perpetuate misinformation and misconceptions. But if they can bring to us echoes of a less specialized age, in which scholars were prepared to confront their problems whole, even if they could not solve them, they will have been well worth while.

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<sup>1</sup> Harvey Cox, *Turning East*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1977.

<sup>2</sup> See the *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Chinese Religions* 6 (Fall, 1978), p. ii.

<sup>3</sup> For a bibliography devoted to Chinese religion as a whole, see Laurence G. Thompson, *Studies of Chinese Religion: A Comprehensive and Classified Bibliography of Publications in English, French and German through 1970*, Dickenson, Encino, 1976. More specialized bibliographies would include Alvin P. Cohen, "A Bibliography of Writings Contributory to the Study of Chinese Folk Religion", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 43.2 (June, 1975), pp. 238-263, and the bibliographies on Taoism listed in the introduction to Kierman's translation of Maspero on Taoism (discussed below), though this overlooks the marginally relevant Jae-ryong Shim, "Selected Bibliography of Philosophical Taoism", *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 7.4 (December, 1980), pp. 341-356.

<sup>4</sup> These would include David Yu, "Present-day Taoist Studies", *Religious Studies Review* 3.4 (October, 1977), pp. 220-239; Michel Strickmann, "History, Anthropology and Chinese Religion", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 40.1 (1980), pp. 201-248; and T. H. Barrett, "Chinese Sectarian Religion", *Modern Asian Studies* 12.2 (April, 1978), pp. 333-352: a further review entitled "The Study of Chinese Eschatology" will appear in *Modern Asian Studies* in 1983.

<sup>5</sup> M. Granet, tr. M. Freedman; *The Religion of the Chinese People*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1975.

<sup>6</sup> Granet, tr. Freedman, *The Religion of the Chinese People*, p. vii.

<sup>7</sup> M. Freedman, "On the Sociological Study of Chinese Religion", in Arthur P. Wolf, ed., *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society* (Stanford University Press, 1974), pp. 19-41.

<sup>8</sup> I have in mind M. Granet, tr. E. D. Edwards, *Festivals and Songs of Ancient China*, Routledge, London, 1932, and M. Granet, tr. K. E. Innes and M. Brailsford, *Chinese Civilization*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1930.

<sup>9</sup> Henri Maspero, tr. Frank A. Kierman, Jr., *Taoism and Chinese Religion*, The University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1981.

<sup>10</sup> Henri Maspero, tr. Frank A. Kierman, Jr., *China in Antiquity*, The University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1978.

<sup>11</sup> Richard Wilhelm, tr. Cary F. Baynes, *The I CHING or Book of Changes*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1951.

<sup>12</sup> Eber quotes a single (though very revealing) paper by Levenson; a much fuller appreciation of his position may be gained from Maurice Meisner and

Rhoads Murphey, eds., *The Mozartian Historian*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1976.

<sup>13</sup> Eber refers the reader to the first Chinese reports of this discovery. These are conveniently summarized in English on pp. 117-118 of Michael A. N. Loewe, "Manuscripts found recently in China", *T'oung Pao* 63.2-3 (1978), pp. 93-136.

<sup>14</sup> On this transformation of our understanding of early China, see especially D. C. Twitchett's introduction to *China in Antiquity*.

<sup>15</sup> The issues concerned are in the twenty-ninth and thirtieth volumes of *Philosophy East and West* and in the seventh volume of the *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*.

<sup>16</sup> One might exclude the work of Richard Wilhelm's son, Hellmut Wilhelm, whose explications of the *I Ching*, though basically following in the footsteps of his father, are informed by an enviable familiarity with early Chinese literature. See, for example, the essays collected in his *Heaven, Earth and Man in the Book of Changes*, University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, 1977.

<sup>17</sup> In *T'oung Pao* 50 (1963), pp. 266-278.

<sup>18</sup> Both Shchutskii and Swanson somehow overlook the important Ch'ing scholar Ts'ui Shu (1740-1816). Ts'ui's criticisms of accepted notions concerning the *I Ching* are, however, touched upon in a convenient Japanese survey of *I Ching* studies: see Honda Wataru, *Eki gaku* (Heirakuji shoten, Kyoto, 1960), pp. 15, 69.

<sup>19</sup> Any reader who feels called to correct Shchutskii in this matter might care to start by reading the three hundred and sixty-two titles on the *I Ching* assembled by Professor Yen Ling-feng and published as the *I Ching Chi-ch'eng* by Ch'eng-wen Publishing Co., Ltd., in Taipei in 1976.

<sup>20</sup> See Shchutskii, pp. 63, 209, and for the political context of Wang Pi's novel development of *I Ching* studies the remarks of Richard B. Mather on pp. 163-165 of his essay "The Controversy over Conformity and Naturalness During the Six Dynasties", *History of Religions* 9.2 and 3 (November 1969/February 1970), pp. 160-180.

<sup>21</sup> *T'oung Pao* 50, p. 271, n. 2.

<sup>22</sup> Miswritten by Shchutskii on p. 223 as *Chou-i t'an-chieh*; this is unfortunately not the only such error to be found in the volume.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Chang Sheng-yen, *Min-matsu Chūgoku Bukkyō no kenkyū* (Sankibō, Tokyo, 1975), pp. 172, 174, 294, 295, 298.

<sup>24</sup> Hsiu-ting Chung-hua ta-tsang-ching hui, editors and publishers, *Chung-hua ta-tsang-ching*, series two, volume 40 (Taipei, 1968), pp. 32299-32464. Also readily available is the edition of this work produced in 1915 by the famous Chin-ling Scriptural Press, which has been reproduced in Taiwan both in Yen Ling-feng's series mentioned above (n. 19) and subsequently in separate reissues of 1978 and 1979.

<sup>25</sup> *Chou-i ch'an-chieh* 1.2b-3b, pp. 32301-2 in the *Chung-hua ta-tsang-ching* edition.

<sup>26</sup> *Chou-i ch'an-chieh*, preface, p. 2b, p. 32299.

<sup>27</sup> For the basis of Chih-hsü's syncretistic views, see Chang, *Min-matsu Chūgoku Bukkyō*, pp. 33-34, 416-417.

## SELF AND NON-SELF IN EARLY BUDDHISM\*

(*Review article*)

STEVEN COLLINS

According to legend, immediately after his enlightenment the Buddha hesitated to preach his message, on the grounds that

This that through many toils I've won,  
Enough! Why should I make it known?  
By folk with lust and hate consumed  
This *dhamma* [teaching] is not understood.  
Leading on against the stream,  
Deep, subtle, difficult to see, delicate,  
Unseen 'twill be by passion's slaves  
Cloaked in the murk of ignorance.

He was persuaded against this by the god Brahmā Sahampati, who bought him to see that there were at least some 'beings with little dust in their eyes.....with acute faculties.....of good dispositions' (Majjhima I 168-9, transl. I. B. Horner). Accordingly, out of compassion for the world, he taught his message; but the earliest scriptures give ample evidence that there were many 'with much dust in their eyes, with dull faculties, of bad dispositions' both within and without the Buddhist fold, who insisted on re-interpreting his message to make it more acceptable, more 'with the stream' of their own desires and prejudices. What was true of the reception of the Buddha's teaching in ancient India is alas still true of its reception by western scholarship today; perhaps the most exasperating and difficult to handle of the many and various mis-interpretations of Buddhism is not the kind which openly declares it to be inconsistent, self-contradictory, or whatever (this at least has the merit of honesty), but rather that which claims to admire and accept the Buddha's teaching, but which sees a real meaning or implication behind his words contradicting what the Buddhist tradition has

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\* J. Perez-Remon, *Self and Non-Self in Early Buddhism*, Religion and Reason 22—The Hague-Paris-New York, Mouton, 1981.

taken them to mean for the last 2500 years. J. Perez-Remon has written such a book. I cannot recommend it to any reader for any reason. Scholars of Buddhism who are sympathetic to the object of their study, and who are only too familiar with the kind of position which the book adopts, will perhaps feel that in this review I am taking a sledgehammer to crack a nut. But it is surely necessary every now and again to re-assert certain fundamentals of Buddhism, and of scholarly propriety. Perez-Remon's book appears in the otherwise admirable 'Religion and Reason' series—it is indicative of his standards of accuracy that the author refers to the series in his preface as 'Religion and Society'—and in such a guise it can and will seriously mislead the unwary, and contribute still more to the conceptual confusion and low intellectual standards which bedevil the study of Buddhism (and of Indian religion generally).

Perez-Remon, like so many others, finds the fundamental Buddhist doctrine of *anattā*, the denial of self, difficult to understand, and so he chooses to re-interpret the texts, to provide a doctrine which he can accept (whether he accepts it as a scholar or as a religious believer is impossible to decipher). A clue to the possible motivation for his efforts is given in the preface, where he thanks various people who have helped him, and adds 'May God bless them all'. He agrees with the late Professor R. C. Zaehner, himself a converted Roman Catholic, who held that the real but hidden teaching of the Buddha was equivalent to that of the Sāṃkhya school of Hinduism, such that the denial of self only refers to a 'lower', psycho-physical or phenomenal self, and not to the 'higher' real self, which is taken to be an individual, monadic soul or 'person' (*puruṣa*). In Zaehner's volume of the Twentieth Century Encyclopaedia of Catholicism, *Christianity and Other Religions* (vol. 146, New York, 1964, pp. 29-30), there is the following, quite correct, account of the Buddhist view: 'Body, mind and psyche are constantly changing and there is no basis in a human being which constitutes a self: everything in this world is devoid of essence, everything is in flux'. The Christian presuppositions emerge in the immediately following sentences, however:

If this is really so, then one wonders why the Buddha should have considered the saving of such insubstantial creatures so immensely worthwhile. Time

and again his compassion for them is stressed; but why, one cannot help asking, did one who had seen the whole world as void of substance, who had detached himself completely from it, and who had entered into an eternal state of being, still concern himself with composite and impermanent creatures who were not the same person for two minutes on end? There seems to be no answer to this question, unless we are prepared to accept the theory that the Buddha did admit the existence of a transcendental self rather on the lines of the Sāṃkhya-Yoga. Scholars have been singularly reluctant to admit this.....

There seems to be no answer to this question, I should prefer to say, only if one does not attend carefully enough to what Buddhists have been saying in their long, sophisticated and detailed examination of these issues for the last 2500 years. Perez-Remon believes (p. 305) that

'in the Nikāyas there is no place for a vedantic type of Tathāgata [Buddha, enlightened man], as was the case with the Tathāgata of the Madhyamikas. Original Buddhsm (sic) belonged by right of birth to the non-Brahmanic world, where the plurality of selves was accepted as a matter of fact. If then the ultimate reality in each man is said to be transcendent, what else can that reality in every man be but man's true self?'

(Of course, the concept of the enlightened man in the *Madhyamaka* is not Vedāntic at all, as it is not anywhere in Buddhism). At the end of the book (p. 301), he openly admits to having prejudged the issue:

We must however confess in all sincerity that the result of the research was from the very beginning present in our minds as a 'hypothesis', as an instrument of work. The idea of this hypothesis had presented itself to us in our previous partial readings of the Nikāyas.

(He does, indeed, announce his conclusion on p. 9). He argues, quite rightly, that an initial hypothesis is 'not only legitimate but advisable'. I would say indeed that an initial hypothesis is inevitable and essential, as a guiding criterion for the collection of evidence relevant to any research project. But hypotheses, to be informative, must be falsifiable; and although Perez-Remon claims that (p. 301)

the accusation levelled by T. R. V. Murti against Mrs. Rhys Davids and others that 'it will not do to pick up only those passages that are favourable to our theory and ignore the rest or call them interpolations or later accretions' does not apply to us. If we have done anything of that sort we have done it after giving reasons which to us seemed convincing,

it is quite clear from his tone and style of argument that nothing could count for him as a refutation of the hypothesis. He rejects as a

later accretion the idea of *paṭicca-samuppāda*, ‘dependent origination’, which all Buddhist schools have naturally and obviously regarded as the central notion of Buddhist thought. His approach is to distinguish between a ‘selfish’ self (which he calls ‘asmimanic’, from the Buddhist term *asmimāna*, ‘the conceit “I am”’), and something which he calls variously the ‘real’ self, ‘true’ self, ‘very’ self, ‘the very personal individuality’, and so on. Thus any text which contains a denial of self is said only to want to deny the former; any text which does not deny the self, or which even seems to presuppose one, can then be said to prove the existence of a belief in the latter. Exactly the opposite is in fact the attitude of Buddhism’s own exegesis of these texts. It holds that in so far as any text does not deny self, or presupposes some notion of one, it is always to be classified as referring only to the level of ‘conventional truth’, where some notion or sense of self (whether cognitive, affective or both) is a necessarily experienced reality in the mind of the unenlightened. Wherever there is any explicit question of the ‘ultimate truth’, it is always and unambiguously denied that any self ultimately or really exists. (Not surprisingly, Perez-Remon rejects the dichotomy between conventional and ultimate truth; for which *vide infra*).

The book abounds in sentences which begin ‘it is difficult to conceive’, or ‘one finds it impossible to think’, and which then continue with something which Buddhists have in fact always thought, and have obviously not found any insuperable difficulty in conceiving. He simply declares (p. 51) that without ‘the reality of the moral agent as depository of inner strength and freedom of choice.....a life of renunciation and spiritual endeavour becomes senseless and even absurd’; and that (p. 139) ‘the *anattavāda* [sc. historical Buddhism] proves unsatisfactory on many a count’. Ernest Gellner (*Words and Things*, rev. ed. London 1979, p. 33) has offered the wise advice in relation to ‘Ideas in History’, that one should ask ‘what would human history look like if this idea were valid?’ In the case of Perez-Remon’s book, we may ask, is one to expect (does *he* expect?) that his book could be accepted as correct, and that Buddhists all over the world would then come to thank him for having pointed out that they have spent 2500 years misinterpreting their own religion, and that it is only now, in the 1980’s,

that thanks to his researches they and we can finally realise what was the real teaching of the Buddha?

There seem to me to be two ways in which one can argue against Perez-Remon's account of Buddhism. One can ask, *a priori*, what kind of methods and attitudes he uses, and if these are appropriate; and one can ask, *a posteriori*, whether the actual arguments he produces, the reasons he adduces for his conclusions, are logically and linguistically accurate. *A priori*, we may ask, what kind of principle of hermeneutical understanding is it which rejects all recorded Buddhist self-understanding, in favour of the aggressively worded opinions of a modern western scholar? (There was a school of Buddhism, the *Pudgalavāda* or 'Personalists', who seem to have tried to lessen the cognitive explicitness of the *anattā* doctrine; research on them is difficult, since we have in the main only the refutations of their (many) Buddhist opponents. But in any case, they did not hold Perez-Remon's Sāṃkhyan view). The first principle of the academic study of religions must be respect for the traditions being studied, particularly for their modern, living representatives. Perez-Remon speaks contemptuously of 'those enmeshed (sic) in the prejudice of the doctrine of absolute *anatta*' (p. 164), and of 'the fallacy of absolute *anatta*' (p. 200). In connexion with a particular argument, he asserts that 'as has been pointed out several times, the *anattavādins* divest the reasoning of all logic' (p. 222). On p. 154 he explicitly conflates the very different conceptual schemes of Sāṃkhya, Jainism and Buddhism, all of which he sees as characterised by 'an irreducible dualism', as follows:

Making use of a general appellation (sic) we may designate those two principles as 'spirit' and 'matter'. Thus we have in Jainism the two fundamental categories of *jīva* and *ajīva*, and in the Sāṃkhya-Yoga, *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. We may venture to anticipate that at the root of Nikayan Buddhism there are also two antagonistic principles, *attā* and *anattā*, even though the doctrine may never have been proposed in this way, and might scandalize the votaries of absolute *anattā*.

It is important to realise that these 'anticipatory' remarks are not directed merely at other scholars, such that the vituperative tone would simply evidence a lack of good manners; they are also directed at the living traditions of Buddhism, such that his book evidences a serious derogation of scholarly proprieties, both intellectual and moral.

The Venerable Mahāthera Walpola Rāhula, a highly distinguished scholar-monk of the *Theravāda* tradition, writes in his book *What the Buddha taught* (Gordon Fraser, 1967, pp. 55-6)

It is.....curious that recently there should have been a vain attempt by a few scholars to smuggle the idea of self into the teaching of the Buddha, quite contrary to the spirit of Buddhism. These scholars respect, admire, and venerate the Buddha and his teaching. They look up to Buddhism. But they cannot imagine that the Buddha, whom they consider the most clear and profound thinker, could have denied the existence of an *Ātman* or Self which they need so much. They unconsciously seek the support of the Buddha for this need for eternal existence—of course not in a petty individual self with a small s, but in the big Self with a capital S.

It is better to say frankly that one believes in an *Ātman* or Self. Or one may even say that the Buddha was totally wrong in denying the existence of an *Ātman*. But certainly it will not do for anyone to try to introduce into Buddhism an idea which the Buddha never accepted, as far as we can see from the extant original texts.

Religions which believe in God and Soul make no secret of these two ideas; on the contrary, they proclaim them, constantly and repeatedly, in the most eloquent terms. If the Buddha had accepted these two ideas, so important in all religions, he certainly would have declared them publicly, as he had spoken about other things, and would not have left them hidden to be discovered only 25 centuries after his death.

I for one would prefer not to regard this evidence of Buddhist belief as 'enmeshed in the prejudice of absolute *anattā*'; nor should I want to assert that the following remarks by Tenzin Gyatso, the fourteenth and present Dalai Lama, summarising over a millenium of Tibetan scholarship, are 'divest(ed) of all logic':

One may arrive at understanding of no-self-nature in another way through the dialectic method called anupalabdhi (the unobtainability of the conditions necessary to prove the object). The no-self-nature of the *ātman* can be explained by the following analogy: A man has only two possible places to look for a cow thought to be missing, but upon making a thorough search in both spots, he fails to find her. He knows that the cow cannot possibly be elsewhere, it being useless to consider a third place, so the fruitlessness of his search becomes apparent and with it his mistaken assumption (of a lost cow) is revealed. Likewise, the assumed independent existence of the *ātman* after one has searched for it both within and without the five heaps [the *skandhas*, categories or aggregates of personality], must be seen to be non-existent. *Belief in an independent *ātman* (soul) is actually the result of mental acuity.* Such ideas of an *ātman* are proved an illusion and proved logically invalid by the sundering (of the views) of oneness and not-oneness so that one arrives at *ātma-śūnyatā* (voidness of the *ātman*) which is synonymous with no-*ātman* of the person (pudgala-nairātmya). In this way and by the force of this dialectic there arises in one who practises thus right view of the Middle Practice-Path.

(*The Opening of the Wisdom-Eye*, Madras 1971, pp. 99-100. Italics in original).

In the light of this sort of clear and forthright statement of Buddhist belief, one might expect that a western scholar attempting to claim that it does not represent 'original Buddhism' would at least marshal his arguments with care and precision. (Remember, Perez-Remon is not merely claiming that the traditional self-understanding of Buddhism is incoherent and unacceptable on philosophical, or other, grounds—he is claiming that it misunderstands the central texts of Buddhism itself). But the *a posteriori* criticisms of the book are legion. Despite making a great show of exhaustive textual research and linguistic argument, in fact its scholarly standards are extraordinarily low, and the book consists largely in groundless assertions based on philological and philosophical errors. In reading it for this review, I have collected a great many pages of such errors: I will cite here only a few of the more obvious and briefly-statable ones.

In the first place, there is his translation of the word *attā* itself. He says, rightly, that 'soul' and 'spirit' are in general unhelpful; and he argues that 'self' is to be preferred because 'it has a sufficiently general meaning applicable in all contexts'. I think there are more precise reasons for using the word 'self' but I would agree that the English word's generality is indeed a help, since in English as in Sanskrit or Pali the terms have such a wide range of denotation and connotation that no specific conceptual position is implied by them. As all students of these languages know, the Sanskrit *ātman*, Pali *attan*, is used both in ordinary discourse and in the philosophical and religious writings of all traditions simply as reflexive pronoun, the masculine singular doing duty for all numbers and genders. In the oblique cases it is used as the direct or indirect object of the verb; in the nominative, or in stem form in compounds, it may be used to express what in English would require periphrasis or emphasis (e.g. 'You *yourself* must find it' or 'it was their *own* fault' or 'He has developed *himself* well'). Thus to take a very simple example, in Act One of Kalidāsa's famous play *Śakuntalā*, one of the eponymous heroine's (female) friends is teasingly trying to restrain her from leaving the king's presence. *Sakuntalā* is obviously enamoured of the king, but also discomfited by the fact, and her two friends playfully and with dramatic irony make reference both to the two protagonists' mutual love and to their inevitable mar-

riage. As Sakuntalā with feigned annoyance starts to leave the forest grove, Priyamvadā says (in Coulson's translation, *Three Sanskrit Plays*, London 1981, p. 55) 'Listen you naughty girl, you shouldn't be leaving like this.....You owe me two lots of tree-watering. Pay me back those and then you can go'. The last sentence in the original reads *attāñam mocidha tado gamissasi*, in the Sanskritised version *ātmāñam mocayitvā tato gamisyasi*. The verb *muñc* is of course 'release', and the term *mokṣa*, or *mukti*, the classic Indian word for enlightenment or liberation, is derived from it; *ātmāñam* is masculine singular accusative. A literal translation would be 'release yourself (sc. from your obligation) and then go', but surely no-one would want to see here any disguised or 'implied' reference to the religious release of 'the' inner self. It is true that the Buddha inhabited a cultural and semantic world rather different from that of Kalidāsa's female characters; but he spoke a syntactically identical language. Perez-Remon wants to see a necessary semantic significance, in the Buddha's case, in the syntactic structure of the language he spoke (p. 9-10):

Now a difference in idiom is to be noticed between Pali and English. In English we speak of 'myself, yourself, himself or herself' which correspond to *attā* or *attāñam*, as the case may be, but a translation like that will often weaken the expressive force of the Pali term, which literally means 'self' or 'the self', that is to say the very personal individuality that justifies in the first place the use of possessive adjectives like 'mine, your, his or her', and of personal pronouns such as 'I, me, etc. Similar is the case with the translation of *attano* as 'of myself, of yourself, etc.', and of *attanā* as 'by myself, by yourself, by himself, etc.' That is why we shall in our translations stick, as far as possible, to the original even at the cost of sacrificing good English idiom.

There is, firstly, an extraordinary conceptual confusion here. If grammatical forms such as personal pronouns and adjectives are only 'justified' by 'the very personal individuality' of 'the self' (whatever that is), then the use of such forms in *any* language will have to refer implicitly to this underlying and justifying fact, and what Perez-Remon argues to be the case in the Pali of the Buddhist Canon will have to be true of any discourse whatsoever. Secondly, the fact that the word *attan* has a variety of meanings and uses, from the direct denotation of a (spiritual, non-empirical) object to a simple reflexive self-reference by or about any individual person (or indeed any object or event which can stand in a relation of subject or

object to a verb), we cannot deduce that the ‘literal’ meaning of the word is the religio-philosophical, theoretical one. Richard Gombrich’s comment on the notion of a ‘literal translation’ is appropriate here. It is, he says ‘an intellectual fallacy and an aesthetic monstrosity.....[In translating] accuracy is a *sine qua non*; but so is taste’ (*On Being Sanskritic*, an Inaugural Lecture, Oxford 1978, p. 27).

It is worth looking a little further here at the textual passage, whose translation Perez-Remon uses to harangue those whom he calls ‘conventionalists’—that is, those who translate the reflexive pronoun in Pali as a reflexive pronoun in English (and who thus see no particular conceptual significance in the use of such terms in ordinary language, in what Buddhism calls ‘conventional truth’ or ‘ordinary everyday language’, *sammuti-sacca, lokavohāra*). The context is as follows: two king’s chamberlains are pleased at seeing the Buddha at last. He encourages them in standard words, arguing that ‘the household life is an oppression’, whereas the monk’s life is free and open, and ends ‘now (is the time) for some energy!’. That is to say, he urges them to take advantage of the opportunity of his inspiring presence to become monks themselves. In their reply—as so often in the Pali canon a passage of gentle irony and humane psychological insight—the two chamberlains, who do not take the opportunity to renounce their ‘oppressive’ life, tell the Buddha that they have a still greater oppression (*sambādha*) than is usual in lay life. When they help the king’s wives onto their riding-elephant for an outing, as is their duty,

the smell of these delicately-perfumed ladies is such, Lord, that it is as if a perfume-box had just been opened; the touch of these joyful ladies is like cotton-wool. On these occasions, Lord, we have to look after the elephant, we have to look after the ladies, and we have to look after ourselves as well! (Samyutta v. 351).

The original of the last sentence is *nāgo pi rakkhitabbo hoti, tā pi bhaginiyo rakkhitabbā, attā pi rakkhitabbo hoti*; that is, the three things ‘to be looked after, protected’, (the gerundive or future passive participle of the verb *rakkhati*) are placed in apposition, in the nominative case, to produce a rather elegant literary and psychological effect. The chamberlains continue by saying that despite these temptations, still no bad thoughts arise in their minds

(though not, obviously, without an effort!), and the Buddha repeats his remarks about the household life and the need for energy. Perez-Remon discusses this passage precisely to illustrate the pitfalls of a ‘conventionalist’, ‘non-literal’ translation, and takes to task F. L. Woodward’s translation for the Pali Text Society. Immediately following the announcement, cited above, that he will sacrifice good English idiom where necessary, he writes

Let us illustrate this point with an example. We have the passage where the two chamberlains of king Pasenadi tell the Buddha:

Well, Lord at that time the elephant is to be guarded, the ladies are to be guarded, and even *the self* is to be guarded (*attā pi rakkhitabbo hoti*) [Italics in original—S.C.].

The last phrase alludes to the care to ward off temptation while attending to the king’s wives of so delicate a complexion and extremely attractive. This temptation tends to sully the self, which has to be kept in check and absolutely pure. This, F. L. Woodward, yielding to the ‘conventionalist’ way of expressing things, translates

Well, Lord, at such times we have to ward the elephant, and we have to ward the ladies, and ward *ourselves* as well (Italics ours).

The expressive force of *attā* (thus in the nominative) in the text seems to have vanished in F. L. Woodward’s translation, where the self as a moral *reality* does not get any prominence. [Italics in original—S.C.]

This is on pp. 9-10. Later, on pp. 29-30, he gives the passage in a slightly fuller form, and comments

As any one can see, Woodward has yielded here to the conventionalist way of looking at things, and has translated *attā pi rakkhitabbo hoti* as ‘we have to ward ourselves as well’, as if the chamberlains had say (sic) *attāno pi rakkhitabbā homa*. [*attāno* here is plural, as is *homa*, ‘we are’, and the phrase is an extremely unusual, though not impossible locution.] The text does not give us an oblique case of *attā*, but the very term *attā* (nominative) in all its meaningful splendour. It stands for the spiritual reality of man that is to kept aloof from any sort of moral perversity.

I can do no more than ask the reader rhetorically, whether or not it behoves us, as western scholars interpreting Buddhism, to twist and turn this kind of passage about to try to discern a ‘real’ Buddhist philosophy of subjectivity; and whether perhaps Perez-Remon’s remarks here do not rather precisely illustrate what Richard Gombrich had in mind when he castigated the notion of ‘literal translation’ in the words I quoted above.

In connexion with the term *anattā*, ‘not-self’, he remarks that the grammatical form is that of a noun, not an adjective, the term being used in apposition to the object or element being denied selfhood.

This is true, but for one or two exceptions, in all cases except the very common *sabbe dhammā anattā* (discussed by Perez-Remon on pp. 211-222, without grammatical comment), where its grammatical form is ambiguous between noun and adjective. The Buddhist tradition has never made any attempt to construe this grammatical fact in a specific way; but Perez-Remon thinks that (p. 195)

The practical consequence of this is important. What is affirmed by means of the predicate *anattā* is not an abstract idea, but a concrete existing reality. Therefore if I say that material form (*rūpam*) is *anattā*, I do not merely say that material form exhibits the characteristic of non-selfhood, but that material form is part of the totality of things opposed and contradictory to the self (*attā*). This confirms the polarity existing in the Nikāyas between the self and the non-self, implying the reality of two positive entities, possessed of antithetical natures.

In fact, in the course of discussing texts which use the term, he forgets this alleged semantic consequence of grammar, and he translates it in the way Buddhists have always treated it, as a neutral characterising predicate ‘not-self’. (It is interesting to compare R. P. Chowdury’s discussion, in the Indian Historical Quarterly vol. 31, 1955, where he insists on the grammatical form of *anattā* as a noun only to conclude that the Buddha taught an Upaniṣadic or Vedāntic universal *Ātman*!)

Perez-Remon’s need to see references to ‘the real self’ everywhere, and his need to give the appearance of philological precision, lead him into many other bizarre errors. There is a word used in the texts, *attakāmo*, which means literally ‘having love for self’, and which is used in a variety of contexts to express the ideas that all men do care for their own well-being; and that they should have a proper, non-self-punitive self-respect (in Buddhism the virtue of loving-kindness, like our charity, begins at home with oneself—although it doesn’t end there). In Perez-Remon’s hands, this becomes ‘one who is in love with the self’, ‘a lover of the self’, and ‘in love with the inner self’ (pp. 35, 37). This might be a reasonable concept to use of certain kinds of Indian religion, for example medieval Vaiṣṇavism, where the devotional relationship of the soul to God is pictured as an erotic-romantic one, and where their ontological relationship is such that God is the reality or support of the self; but it is hardly appropriate for Buddhism, which denies both the self and God, and gives no religious value to the no-

tion of ‘being in love’, howsoever spiritualised. Perez-Remon’s historical-critical (and moral) standards are adequately symbolised by his remarks here that ‘the compound is made up of two parts highly offensive to later Buddhist thought. This alone seems to guarantee its antiquity’ (p. 35).

Similarly, he insists that the compound *ajjhattarato* must be translated ‘in love with the inner self’, and that the Pali Text Society Dictionary’s rendering ‘with inward joy’ ‘would be, if at all, the translation of *ajjhattarati*. *Rato* means “attached to, in love with”’ (p. 44). In fact, as is even more usually the case in Pali than in Sanskrit, the semantic value of a compound cannot be exactly decided by its syntactic form. The compound *ajjhattarato*, usually used in contexts of blissful and calm meditative absorption (thus the PTS. Dictionary’s rendering, and cf. the Critical Pali Dictionary, ad loc.), can be analysed in a variety of ways. Perez-Remon wants it to be a dependent determinative (in Sanskrit terminology a *tatpuruṣa*), ‘devoted to (what is) within’. This is possible, but so equally it could be an exocentric or possessive (*bahuṛīhi*), ‘having inner joy’; that is, a descriptive determinative (*karmadhāraya*) ‘inner-joy’, *ajjhattarati*, used adjectivally, with the *-i* ending of *rati* as a noun converted, as standardly, to an *-a* ending as an adjective *in fine compositi*. This would parallel many other possessive or adjectival compounds such as *ajjhattasamyojana*, ‘having inner fetters’ or *ajjhattārammaṇa*, ‘having an inner (perceptual or meditational) object’. The translation ‘in love with the inner self’ is in any case absurdly inappropriate for Buddhist philosophy and psychology; but my point is that this is an issue which cannot be decided on purely linguistic grounds—as it is, Perez-Remon seeks to reinforce a bad translation by a bad philological argument.

On p. 24, he discusses the phrase *kataṁ me saraṇaṁ attano*, which he translates ‘I have made a refuge for the self’. This rendering follows, he says, *inter alia*, from the facts that

*me* is here the agent of the passive participle *kataṁ*, and *attano* is a dative that stands for the beneficiary of the action of the verb. The Buddha is about to die and reveals his inner disposition when about to attain *parinibbāna*. He does not say that he has left the self aside as if it were only a hindrance, he does not say either that he has waged war against the self and finally destroyed it. On the contrary he seems to give as an equivalent of his readiness to pass into utter *nibbāna* the fact that he has made a refuge for the self. The ambivalence of the

term *attā* becomes clear from the fact that in this sentence *me*, the active agent, and *attano*, the beneficiary of the action, are not two different entities but one and the same, that is, the Buddha who is about to attain utter *nibbāna*. The reality of *attā* is here linked to the reality of *nibbāna*.

Although, again, no particular semantic interpretation follows from the syntax, it is in fact the case that the enclitic pronoun *me* can be instrumental, dative or genitive, and that *attano* can be either dative or genitive (the genitive case in Pali, as in Sanskrit, often tending to usurp the semantic functions of the other oblique cases, apart, for example, from the accusative used for a direct object). Various syntactic analyses of the phrase are thus possible; but the correct semantic rendering, as always with the notion of 'making oneself a refuge' in Buddhism, is simply that one should, indeed can only rely on oneself in religious practice, and succeed only through one's own efforts. In context, this phrase is used by the Buddha to claim that he has done so. No metaphysical meaning is needed or implied. (The translations in both Rhys Davids' *Sacred Books of the Buddhists*, vol. 3, and the Buddhist Publication Society's recent (1974) Wheel pamphlet no. 67-9 have simply 'relying on myself alone'.)

I shall not continue with this list of detailed linguistic points. I hope I have said enough to suggest that the impression given by this book of philological care and expertise (given at least to the non-specialist) is quite misleading. Philosophical and historical solecisms are even more ubiquitous in the book than philological ones. Overall, the argument rests on a complete confusion between the descriptive-historical task of *exegesis*, and the evaluative-philosophical task of assessing the contemporary *significance*, of any set of religious beliefs. In the present state of our knowledge of Indian religion and of Buddhism, the second of these two tasks is, I think, almost always necessarily premature. It is because Perez-Remon cannot see any significance in the traditional view of itself given by Buddhism that he seeks to introduce a view—incoherent as it is in itself—which he can accept as a principle of exegesis for the study of Buddhist texts. That is to say, he reads his own views onto Buddhism. The manoeuvre which he thinks enables him to reassess Buddhism in this way is to ignore that meta-linguistic principle which has been the foundation of all Buddhist philosophy, internal disagreements as to its precise elucidation notwithstanding: that

is, the distinction between 'conventional' and 'ultimate truth'. In the preface he tells us that 'most of the people who have written on the *anattā* doctrine have done it after being thoroughly steeped in the mentality of the later commentaries. We preferred to go straight to the original sources and to study the texts in their original setting.' On pp. 1-2 we read that

We undertook the study of this subject, because from our first contacts with the original Pāli scriptures we got the impression that things were not as clear as some people would have us believe. We must admit that we did not expect to find such a huge mass of material in the texts themselves. This made it impossible for us to examine the development of the doctrine in the *Abhidhamma* and the Scholastic commentaries. All the same, our purpose was from the very beginning to go as close as possible to the foundation-head of Buddhism and to approach it as part of the Indian intellectual atmosphere prevailing in its world of origin. We must avow that the careful reading of the texts, even though many times dull and wearisome, has been rewarded with new insights and, to some extent at least, with real discoveries.

No one can deny that the *anattā* doctrine is and has been from early times a pillar of Buddhist dogma, together with all-pervading impermanence (*anicca*), and suffering (*dukkha*). No one can deny either that this doctrine is consistently propounded with great emphasis by orthodox Buddhists as one of the most outstanding characteristics of their system.

It has often been a topic of discussion whether the doctrine of the so-called *soullessness* was taught by the Buddha himself or was only a later development. Individual texts or at most a limited number of them have been adduced while trying to prove that such was not the teaching of the Buddha, that he admitted the reality of the self. On the other hand, a great number of scriptural testimonies are ready at hand wherein the *anattā* doctrine is explicitly stated. There seem to be, in the earliest parts of the canon, texts which apparently at least conflict with one another. There are many, not just a few, passages, in the earlier parts of the Pāli canon, that express themselves as if *attā* were a reality, not discussed but taken for granted in the most natural way. A way out of the difficulty has been at times to distinguish between exoteric and esoteric teachings, [this is, in fact, a misleading and un-Buddhist way of phrasing the notion], between empirical and ultimate truth. But are such distinctions valid in this matter? The *anattā* doctrine raises many questions such as the reality of the moral agent and the existence and nature of moral responsibility, the continuity of individuality (personality?) in the rebirth-cycle, the nature of *kamma* and the way it works, the relation of *nibbāna* to the individual that attains to it. There are texts wherein the Buddha refuses to answer the question whether the liberated man exists or does not exist after death. Other texts seem to imply that the liberated man is a reality, in fact the quintessence, so to say, of all reality. All this comes to show that a systematic and complete study of the *anattā* doctrine and all its implications is a thing much to be desired.

Swallowing a sense of pained astonishment at the condescending tone of these remarks, I shall discuss both the restriction of atten-

tion to the ‘original Pali scriptures’ (that is, to the *Sutta-Pitaka* with a few references to the *Vinaya*), and the refusal to use the ‘orthodox’ Buddhist distinction between conventional and ultimate truth.

In the first place, as an economic principle of study, restricting one’s attention to the Suttas might perhaps have some value. This is not, however, as Perez-Remon and others have thought, because they give us access to ‘original’ Buddhism. They do not, they merely give us access to what the *Theravāda* tradition has considered to have canonical authority. In fact, the Canon contains a wide variety of texts, early and late, and we need to know first of all why *just these* texts have been accorded canonical status. (The texts constituting the Canon have not in fact historically formed an unchanging and unambiguous class.) Given these historical facts and the inevitable restrictions on scholars’ time, an internal analysis of *what has been considered canonical* might be worthwhile, as it might tell us something about the *Theravāda* tradition (though not, I suspect, very much). But Perez-Remon’s restriction of attention to a particular area of the Canon has the specific and polemical point of apparently enabling him to ignore all the texts he finds too difficult to re-interpret (and perhaps, too ‘dull and wearisome’), in the name of a concern with ‘original Buddhism’. Scholars of Mahāyāna Buddhism, and of the Buddhist texts preserved in Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese, will certainly find the assumption that the Pali texts represent ‘original Buddhism’ in any straightforward and simple way problematic, to say the least. But, leaving this point aside, is it true to say that the sources Perez-Remon consults do not contain the distinction between conventional and absolute truth? They do not, indeed, contain these two technical terms, with clear indications as to which is in play in any given text, but do we expect a body of inspirational, exhortatory religious writing to offer a simultaneous meta-linguistic analysis of itself? In a deservedly well-known and admired book, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge* (London, 1963), K.N. Jayatilleke showed that not only was a distinction between writings which were *nītattha* and *neyyattha*, ‘of direct/indirect, explicit/implicit meaning’ recognised in the early texts (indeed S. Schayer and L. de la Vallée Poussin had shown this in the 1930’s); but also that of course the notion of ‘conventional’ or merely ‘worldly’ talk (*loka-vohāra*, *-nirutti*, etc.) was used frequently in them

to explain how the Buddha and other enlightened men could see the truth of not-self but nevertheless continue to use ordinary language with its personal pronouns, adjectives, and so on. In Samyutta i 14, for example, it is said that the words 'I speak' (*aham vadamīti*) and '(others) speak to me' (*mamam vadantīti*) are 'merely conventional usage' (*vohāramatta*).

I have already remarked on the question of the propriety of western scholars telling the Buddhist tradition how to interpret itself (I stress that this is not the same thing as western scholars evaluating Buddhism in their own terms, though this evaluation is almost always, when carried out, ill-informed); but Perez-Remon's rejection of the universal Buddhist hermeneutical distinction between the explicit and the implicit is vitiated by the fact that he himself has recourse to the very same strategy of elucidation. He regularly re-writes the translation of particular passages, as he says 'making explicit in brackets what is implicitly understood' (p. 182, said of a particularly gauche re-writing of a passage from the *Alagaddūpama Sutta*, a classic *anattā* text). If he can do it, why can't Buddhists? As Buddhists have indeed done just this throughout their history, by what right does he so aggressively reject their own intuitions as to what is implicit? Given that Buddhist intuitions as to what is the meaning, explicit or implicit, of the texts preserved as canonical just *are* the content of Buddhism, or at least of its intellectual history, what exactly does he mean by saying 'a way out of the difficulty has been at times to distinguish between.....empirical and ultimate truth'?

Elsewhere, Perez-Remon is quite happy not only to re-write the translation of canonical passages, but even to 'correct' the texts himself (e.g. p. 25 and note 13, pp. 27-8 and note 19). On p. 312 note 48, speaking of a passage in which the Buddha refers to himself in the third person, as 'the sage' (*muni*), he tells us that

The composer of the *sutta* did not realize that these statements, being redacted in the third person could not have been uttered by the Buddha, who would have spoken in the first person singular. The original would be more intelligible if instead.....

(Of course, in the Pali canon and throughout Sanskrit literature the honorific use of the third person, both for the speaker and addressee, is entirely normal and unexceptionable). Students of the

Pali canon are familiar with the frequent repetitions it contains, both of particular sequences within one text and of stock passages across texts. This is partly, but not wholly, explained by the oral culture from which they arose. Speaking of a text which contains the doctrine of Dependent Origination (*paticca-samuppāda*), a teaching which he never adequately confronts precisely because it goes so clearly against his thesis, Perez-Remon graciously excuses the confusion he sees there (p. 138):

But the composers of the Nikāyas were not creating a written text but a text meant for recitation, and expediency made them include as many stock passages as possible, which by reason of their frequent occurrence became a great help to the memorizing of the reciters. This mechanical addition of stock passages without effecting in them the changes needed to make them fit perfectly well in the new context does not at times make things as clear as one would wish them to be.

This comes in a meandering and confused account of a number of texts dealing with the idea of Dependent Origination, an account which replaces their unambiguous clarity and coherence with a variety of obfuscations, not the least of which being the assertion that

The later date of these passages is evinced by the part of the Nikāyas where they are found [he offers no arguments for this, referring without comment in the notes to another scholar's work, which has not found general acceptance] and the foregoing analysis which has shown these two suttas to be a veritable patchwork.

Throughout the book there is a curious attempt to collate Buddhism not only with Jainism, but also with the Sāṃkhya tradition of Hinduism, as non-Brahmanical parts of 'the Eastern stream of religious thought' (p. 154)—by which he means the North-East of India, the Ganges plain—apparently in opposition to 'theistic Hinduism'. Given this,

early Buddhism should be aligned with the eastern current of thought, taking it to be akin to other systems, characterized (sic) by their antagonism with any idea of theistic creationism, by their lack of any ritualistic bias, and radically founded on an irreducible dualism between self and non-self (p. 155).

In the note appended to this suggestion, he shows that what he has in mind by 'theistic creationism' is the mysticism of the *Upaniṣads*:

From this point of view, the *Upaniṣads* belong to an entirely different world. In the first place, the *Upaniṣads* profess to a great extent a theistic and creationistic doctrine (Cf. Augustine G. Aranjaniyil, *The Idea of a Personal God in*

*the Major Upaniṣads*, Bangalore, 1975), while shramanism repudiates all belief in a Creator God.

Thus to support his argument, he has not only to distort the *Upaniṣads*, since of course these texts contain a great variety of kinds of religious doctrine and feeling, only some of which are sensibly described as 'theistic', but also to assimilate *Sāṃkhya* doctrine to the non-Upaniṣadic 'stream of thought', when a great many *Upaniṣads* use what is often called 'proto-*Sāṃkhya*' terminology. His position is indeed multiply paradoxical, for of course those *Upaniṣads* which do use *Sāṃkhya* or *Sāṃkhya*-like terms are precisely those which tend towards a more theistic, personal-absolute mysticism, albeit that the later classical *Sāṃkhya* was atheistic; whereas the earlier texts, such as the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and *Chāndogya Upaniṣads*, which do not use these terms so much, are characterised by an impersonal-absolute, monistic or pantheistic mysticism, which can only be called 'theistic creationism' from a very particular, and idiosyncratic, perspective.

The absence of any realistic awareness of the cultural and historical position of the texts he is discussing is matched by a total lack of philosophical and methodological self-awareness. In the course of the argument he regularly introduces his own philosophical views, with no apparent sense that they might themselves be problematic. On p. 256 he contrasts two uses of the term *attā* in the texts on the grounds that 'the former is a spontaneous simple, natural reference to the self while the second betrays an unhealthy sophisticated mentality bent on speculation'. In the Buddha's teaching, however, any spontaneous self-reference is a reference to the false, 'selfish' self of 'the conceit "I am"', whose denial and removal is exactly what enlightenment is. If Perez-Remon thinks there is a 'natural, spontaneous' form of discourse which must be taken as referring to, and proving the existence of 'the self', he might at least tell us what he thinks it is. On p. 79 he discusses two verses to show that 'a merely "reflexive sense"' will not exhaust the fullness of meaning of the term *attā* in them. The first is verse 275 of the *Sutta Nipāta*, which properly translated reads 'if he [one attempting to lead a religious life] is given to abuse, and brutally delights to harm (others), his own life (just) gets worse and he increases his own defilement'. The verse is taken from the 'Sutta on Leading the Religious Life', and the moral

point is both obvious and simple. Perez-Remon translates the second line (*jivitam tassa pāpiyo, rajam vadheti attano*) as ‘the life of such is sinful, it increases the impurity of the self’, and comments

Shall we translate the last *pāda* as ‘it increases his own impurity? But what kind of impurity is that? All will agree that it is not physical but ‘spiritual’. Hence the *pāda* will be more fittingly translated as ‘it increases the impurity of the self’.

Similarly, immediately following this, he comments as follows on a verse from the *Dhammapada* (163), ‘it is easy to do deeds which are evil and harmful to oneself, but what is good and of benefit is very hard indeed to do’, which is equally simple, but in which he translates the relevant phrase as ‘harmful to the self’:

The harm mentioned here affects the ‘spiritual’ man. Therefore we cannot see in *attano* a merely reflexive pronoun which will refer to man in a general way, but a term that stands for the ‘spiritual’ man or self.

The ideas that a dichotomy between physical and ‘spiritual’ sides of man is relevant here, and that if some non-physical kind of impurity is in question, it implies a belief in ‘the self’, are ideas to which certainly not all will agree. A simplistic version of Cartesian dualism, and the view that acceptance of the meaningfulness of non-physical referential terms when applied to human beings necessarily implies a particular kind of view of subjectivity, are not the only possible tools we have for understanding the philosophy of Buddhism (or indeed, anything else).

On pp. 80-1, he discusses some verses from the *Theragāthā* (766-8), in which a monk says simply that he looked not to himself but to the Buddha for guidance, and thus attained release. Perez-Remon again mistranslates the passage, and makes heavy weather of the fact that the monk’s ‘not relying on self’ (his translation of *anadhitthāya attānam*—(wrongly spelt in the text *anaditthāya*)—for which see K. R. Norman’s note ad loc. in *Elder’s Verses I*, London, 1969) seems to contradict the other injunctions, as he sees them, to ‘make the self a refuge’ or to ‘rely on the self’. He says that these latter expressions

tell us to rely on no other than the self for refuge, while *anadhitthāya attānam* excludes any reliance on the self....Therefore, both these selves cannot be equated. The second one stands for the self that is *ditthigatam* [i.e. the object of false view], as becomes clear from the context, the first one will stand, as a result of the contrast, for the true self....

The doctrine underlying this passage should be well pondered. The immediate source of good and the immediate source of evil cannot be one and the same without any distinction. Whenever there is any activity which tends to final release, the self involved there as the immediate source of such activity is the true self. But the immediate source of any activity that tends to confirm or prolong the samsaric involvement of the self cannot be the true self as such but the moral self working under the wrong notion of its mistaken identity with what is non-self. This wrong notion of self is at work as long as there is any remnant of attachment to those things that are not the self.

Those familiar with moral philosophy, in the west and in India, will recognise hidden under the bad translation, verbiage and conceptual confusion here a genuine and familiar problem. If the real self is necessarily non-karmic, non-evil and not ignorant, how does moral and cognitive error ever arise? Karl Potter has discussed this as a general problem of Indian philosophy in his *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies*, Chapters 6, Freedom and Causation, and 10, Negation and Error (Prentice-Hall 1963). In the west, the problem is perhaps most clearly present in Kant. If, as he (like Socrates) thinks, morally good action is free, rational action, and if as he holds, to be a self is to be in essence free and rational, how and whence does *free morally bad* action arise? If it is evil it cannot be free and rational, but if it is not free and rational, how do we characterise it by moral predicates? Is it not simply causally-conditioned and so unfree and not attributable to the 'responsible self'? In Buddhism, where (pace Perez-Remon) there is no true or real self, it might be thought that this problem would not arise. But in fact, in the later Mahāyāna notions of the *tathāgatagarbha*, a similar problem can be seen. It is not a problem of a self, but a problem of whether the 'principle of enlightenment' existing in all or most beings is entirely separate from, or related (and if so, how?) to those other parts of the psycho-physical composite conventionally seen as a 'person', from which karmically-unwholesome deeds arise. (On this, see D. S. Ruegg, *La Théorie du Tathāgatagarbha et du Gotra*, Paris 1969). It might be, then, given this parallel problem in later Buddhist thought, that pushing a consideration of the issue through the texts of other, possibly earlier schools could produce some interesting results. But such a project would require the scholarly virtues of patience, self-aware humility and reasonable judgement, not the misinformed, hasty and heated polemic that passes for argument in Perez-Remon's book.

Finally, in making sense of his notion of a ‘true self’ in Buddhism, despite Buddhism’s ubiquitous denial of its existence, he makes use of a distinction, which is unemphasised but crucial to his position, and which will interest those who have spent any time working on notions of ontology: it is between the English words ‘existence’ and ‘reality’. They have different meanings: ‘existence’, he says, ‘has a samsaric connotation’ whereas he sees in Buddhism the ‘*reality*.....of a self besides the *khandhas*’ (pp. 171-2, his italics). In a footnote to the rather irritated remark that ‘we have been told that to say of [the enlightened man after death] that he exists or does not exist is a *ditthi* [a pointless speculative view] and therefore the result of a mentality that identifies the self with the samsaric factors’ (p. 299), he explains that

As we have remarked somewhere else, existence and non-existence are terms of a merely samsaric import. That is why we have deliberately avoided referring to the metaphysical self’s existence, preferring to speak rather of its reality. (p. 383 note 60).

This is a distinction which it would be impossible to make in Pali or Sanskrit terms which the non-philosophical use of these languages could recognise (not that it is easy in English). Of course in Indian and Buddhist philosophy a very great number of very subtle and sophisticated distinctions between kinds or levels of reality were made. My colleague Paul Williams, who works on precisely this problem, tells me that—given a certain ambiguity in the texts between what *we* would call the ontological concept of reality and the epistemological concept of truth—among the many distinctions in Buddhist thought which spring to mind immediately are the well-known *Vijñānavāda* notions of *parikalpita/paratantra/pariniṣpanna* levels (roughly ‘imaginary/dependent/perfected’), the Sanskrit *Abhidharma* dichotomy between *prajñaptisat* and *dravyasat* entities (‘conceptually’ or ‘secondarily existent’ and ‘really’ or ‘primarily existent’), the Indian *Madhyamaka* discussions of the different levels of *samvṛti-satya* ‘conventional truth’ (where things can be either true or false at the—ultimately entirely false—conventional level, *samyak-* and *mithyā-samvṛti-satya*) and the distinctions made by Tsong-kha-pa for example in Tibet between ‘existence’ (*yod pa*), being ‘essentially established’ (*rang gi ngo bor grub*) and being ‘truly established’ (*bden par grub*). Instead of having the humility and patience to look at the

concepts and categories developed on this very difficult and central issue by the many Buddhist traditions themselves, we are offered a grotesquely simple and unargued English-language distinction, which brings out into the open the basis of Perez-Remon's argument, but which is so carelessly treated that in the footnote where it is most clearly acknowledged, he does not even bother to remember where he introduced it ('As we have remarked somewhere else.....').

I am sorry to have had to write such a condemnatory review of this book. As a general rule it seems to me better to review books about which one can find positive things to say, and to pass over in silence those about which one cannot. But in this case, some protest at an appallingly confused, confusing and wholly uncreative work must be made. I do not even think that giving it to students to criticise would be a worthwhile pedagogical exercise. I am sorry that if Señor Perez-Remon sees this review, he will find it offensive; but I am even sorrier about the offence given by his arrogant and silly book, both to the values of humane scholarship, and—still more—to the living traditions of Buddhism.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

CLOTHEY, Fred W., *The Many Faces of Murukan: The History and Meaning of a South Indian God* — The Hague-Paris-New York, Mouton, 1978, xvi + 248 p., ISBN 90-279-7632-5.

OBYESEKERE, G., *Medusa's Hair: An Essay on Personal Symbols and Religious Experience* — Chicago and London, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1981, xiii + 217 p.

The Indian sub-continent and especially its southern part (including "Buddhist" Sri Lanki) is teeming with gods. The Kataragama cult in Ceylon has been studied in recent years by, among others, G. Obeyesekere and K. Hausherr. We are all waiting for Obeyesekere's *magnum opus* on the goddess Pattini. One of the most intriguing and multifaceted South Indian gods is Murukan, and scholars (including Clothey) are surely right in stressing his essentially Tamil character and functions, no matter what "Sanskrit", "Vedic", or other "Great Tradition" (alongside popular) and "classical" (alongside regional) elements have gone into the making of this fascinating god. Clothey valiantly tries to keep the promise implicit in his title, and to a considerable extent he also succeeds. His approach, though decidedly "phenomenological" is at the same time also historical (cf. his discussion of the Sanskrit Skanda-Kumara background and its later Tamil Nadu transformations). Hence he not only tries to interpret the cultic and symbolic significances of this religious phenomenon but also discusses the various stages and aspects of its historical evolution. Critics of the phenomenological method, especially when they are in an acerbic and sarcastic mood, often assert that the difference between the phenomenologist and the philologist is that the former enjoys the luxury of *verstehen* and interpreting without having to know the language and the sources of the phenomena he claims to "understand". Reading Clothey's study one cannot help wondering, perhaps unfairly, whether the author really has first-hand knowledge of Tamili language, texts and sources: there are too many odd transliterations and puzzling forms of names, and the versions of Tamil texts and devotional literature appear to be secondhand. Some important facets of the god's symbolism are lacking in the section "Murukan and his symbolism". Nevertheless the book is a useful and valuable contribution to our understanding of the history, meaning and social functions (especially for the Tamili sense of identity) of the many faces of Murukan.

The brief reference in the preceding paragraph to Obeyesekere's articles on Kataragama (name of the pilgrimage centre in Sri Lanka as well as of the deity worshipped there) provides an opportunity of drawing attention to *Medusa's Hair*, surely one of the most exciting contributions to the oft maligned (not without reason!) attempts at combining study of religions, anthropology and psychoanalysis. The author has succeeded in raising this combination (canonised by Freudians, and dismissed by anti-Freudians as "reductionist") to new levels of theoretical reflection. He illustrates rather than argues that the hackneyed distinction of personal *versus* cultural viz. social symbolism ("private and public symbols") is totally inadequate, and that the interaction of belief in ghosts and spirits, possession, devotion, asceticism, ritual and—last but not least—gods and their imagery and iconography as well as myths and meanings can only be understood in terms of a two-way traffic between individual experience (interpreted anthropologically) and culture (interpreted psychoanalytically).

Prospective readers puzzled by the title of this extremely important and hence also controversial book should be informed that the Kataragama cult has undergone some fascinating developments in recent times and that among its most striking features are the long locks of matted hair displayed by its priests and priestesses (in addition to such acts of devotion as fire-walking, tongue-piercing, hanging on hooks and the like). Hence the metaphorical voyage of Medusa from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean. And for the psychoanalytically oriented anthropologist it is no voyage at all.

RJZW

ROSE, Eugen, *Die manichäische Christologie*, Studies in Oriental Religions 5 — Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 1979, xii, 199 p.

Based on a broad foundation of sources ranging from primary materials found in Egypt (in Coptic and Greek) and in Central Asia (in Iranian languages, Turkic and Chinese) to secondary sources in Latin, Greek, Syriac and Arabic, this comprehensive study of Manichaean christology leads us to the center of the theological system which developed out of Manis religion. In fact more is dealt with than christology alone; of necessity the other divine and saving figures of the Manichaean System are also traced. The study was originally written as a doctoral dissertation for Marburg University (1941), but it has been strongly revised in view of new materials like the Cologne Mani Codex and of more recent studies in Manichaeism. The Cologne Codex has confirmed the original thesis of the

author who sees in Jesus/Christ a central figure of Manichaean thinking, not only the name for the gnostic saviour employed in a Christian environment. But Christ is for the Manichaeans not only the saviour. The author discerns in the Manichaean texts five different manifestations (*probolai*). He is

1. the cosmic principle residing in the sun and the moon;
2. the saviour who brings to man the redeeming *gnosis*;
3. the *Jesus patibilis* as the light dispersed in matter;
4. the "historical" Jesus of Nazareth and
5. the judge who will appear at the end of time and whose function is hence eschatological.

As a cosmic figure, Christ stands above all worldly woe, he is *impatibilis*, and as such he resides in sun and moon. His appearance is androgynous, he is the male "Vir-tus" and the female "Sophia" or "Sapientia". He is instrumental in filtering out the elements of light from matter with the help of sun and moon.

As a typically Gnostic saviour figure Jesus *Zīwānā* is the divinity who brings to Adam the saving wisdom. But his role as such is not only mythological, for he is also invoked in many a Central Asian hymn as the "great saint".

Rose shows that the *Jesus patibilis* of Augustine can be identified with the five sons of Primal Man who were left behind when Primal Man was rescued. He is the light bound up in matter, suffering and crying for salvation. The cross of Christ is for Mani the symbol for that suffering.

The "historical Jesus" is one in the series of "prophets of truth". Since Mani regarded himself as the last in this series he took as authentic only such words of the "prophet" Jesus as were in accordance with his dualistic position.

Finally Jesus as eschatological Judge takes up a tradition of the gospels. Rose shows how Jesus as Judge is closely connected with the psychopompos who leads the soul of the elect to sun and moon and thence on to the world of light.

The value of Rose's erudite book lies in the integration and systematic analysis of diverse materials and the presentation of an integrated picture of the Christ figures in Manichaeism. He is careful to point out that the figures differentiated here can merge with other saving deities in hymns and psalms. The analysis of the complex theology is impressive. However, in view of the fact that the Manichaean system itself developed, and did so separately in east and west, one wonders whether the picture painted is not an "ideal" one, putting together facts from different times and areas. Of course much work will have to be done before the development of

Manichaean theology can be discerned. Yet this can only be achieved on the background of a general picture of that theology, a central part of which is dealt with in this well documented study.

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WHALING, Frank, *The Rise of the Religious Significance of Rāma* — Delhi,  
Motilal Banarsi Dass, 1980, Rupees 100.

This work aims at redressing an imbalance in Western approaches to North Indian *bhakti* religion: the *iṣṭadevata*, of Western scholars, i.e. the deity favour they over others, is more likely to be Kṛṣṇa than his fellow-avatar Rāma. The reasons for this neglect of Rāma, who by any reasonable criteria must be judged to be as popular and as significant to the history of Indian religion as is Kṛṣṇa, are not clear. Part of the explanation may lie, as Whaling notes on his first page, in the central position allocated to the *Bhagavadgītā*, where Kṛṣṇa plays a major role (this centrality of the *Gītā* would be seen as quite out of proportion in a traditional South Indian perspective); or perhaps Western scholars of religion, unlike most Hindus, found themselves bored with Rāma's appallingly ideal nature. There is no doubt that Rāma functions as the most outstanding exemplar of the Hindu *dharma*ic ideals. Here the contrast with Kṛṣṇa is most striking; the devotees of the latter deity have sometimes to be reminded to do as the god says, not as He does (p. 2).

As the title of the book indicates, Whaling is concerned not so much with the analytical reconstruction of the Rāma traditions as a whole as with developments in the sphere which he delimits as "religious". He thus seeks to view Rāma as a "symbol" unfolding over time its many latent meanings, and he is particularly interested in various "theological" issues arising from the Rāma literature. He concentrates on three texts: Vālmīki's Sanskrit epic, the *Rāmāyaṇa*; the medieval *Adhyātmarāmāyaṇa*; and the Hindi classic of Tulsī Dās, the *Rāmcaritmānas*. Each of these texts is treated extensively in terms of the narrative developments, salient themes ('Rāma as Hero', 'Rāma the Ideal King', 'Rāma as Devotional Lord', etc.), and "religious" contents (e.g. the nature and types of devotionalism mentioned in the texts, ontological issues relating to Rāma's divinity, or what the author refers to, somewhat awkwardly, as "Rāmology"). Whaling is to be commended for his thoroughness and for the empathy he reveals for the sources; any student of the *Rāmāyaṇa* will find much of interest in this volume.

An appendix is devoted to a comparison of “Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, and Christ”. Here the author works through a theme hinted at in the book’s preface, by the great Sanskritist Daniel H. H. Ingalls (Whaling’s teacher at Harvard): “The Rāma tradition shows religious attitudes closer to the traditional attitudes of European religion than will be found elsewhere throughout the time and space of Indian culture.” (p. ix). More specifically, the shared element involves “the religious use of grief” (p. x). This thesis (a kind of Christological perspective on *Rāma-bhakti*) is clearly appealing at first glance, but it seems to this reviewer to distort the general tone of the Rāma tradition. True, the *Rāmāyaṇa* itself is given to tragic views—Vālmīki’s special talent seems to have been in depicting sorrow, loss, and lamentation; and indeed the text itself, in the famous introductory passage concerning the Krauñca birds, describes the origin of poetry as a transformation of the poet’s grief (*sókah ślokatvam āgataḥ*, 1.2.40). Indian poeticians such as Abhinavagupta were also well aware of this predilection for tragic stances in the *Rāmāyaṇa*.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the Rāma literature is particularly fond of stressing the sufferings undergone by its main hero, who is God incarnate.<sup>2</sup> To cite but one, typical instance (from a version not studied by Whaling, Kampan’s Tamil *Rāmāyaṇa*): when Rāma’s aged father, Daśaratha, wishes to bestow the kingdom on his son and retire to the forest, he says,

Endless was my grief  
at having no sons, until  
Rāma came  
to remove my sorrow.  
Now *he* must suffer,  
while *I*  
am saved. (2.1.27).

The verse turns upon the word *varunta*—the sorrows of the divine avatar—while even appearing to approach the notion of vicarious suffering (generally absent from the Rāma tradition: Whaling, p. 340). Nor is there any doubt here, or in any other medieval *Rāmāyaṇa*-text, of this suffering saviour’s identity as the one God.

For all that, it is more than a little difficult to see Rāma primarily as an innocent sacrificial lamb. His sufferings are like those of other exemplary kings (Yudhiṣṭhira, Indra, Hariścandra); indeed, much of their significance derives from their relation to kingship generally, or to what might be seen as the tragic, anti-*dharma* side of *dharma*. The elusive and problematic nature of *dharma*, with its ineluctable evils, constitutes a major theme in the *Rāmāyaṇa* literature as in the *Mahābhārata*. (See, for example,

the famous episode of Rāma's slaying of the monkey-king Vālin; or Lakṣmaṇa's fierce denunciation of *dharma* in 6.83.14-44). It is no wonder that Rāma, as ideal hero and king, must suffer: this dimension of loss and painful limitation inheres in the *dharmic* order, as it does in the relation between the *bhakti* god and his world. Rāma is *not* an instance of God's taking on the sins and sorrows of his believers but rather an exemplar of the divine trapped in a world suffused by separation. All this calls forth in the *bhakta* a powerful feeling of sorrowing with the god's sorrow—the *karuṇārasa* of the poeticians—as well as a more general sense of the tragic aspect of life (even, or especially, of the life of the perfect hero). In fact, the *karuṇā* evoked by the Rāma story is closely bound up with the radical idealization of the heroes—the vision of Rāma as perfect ruler, husband, brother, son, or of Sītā as the *dharmic* wife—and it is this tendency which, in the experience of this reviewer, generates much of the emotional power of *Rāmabhakti* for its believers. Here again the contrast with Kṛṣṇa is instructive: for Kṛṣṇa, too, can evoke *karuṇā*, but not as emphatic sorrow for his own sufferings—it is rather the compassion revealed by the divine clown or trickster as he observes the horrors his amusements have caused.

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<sup>1</sup> See J. L. Masson and M. V. Patwardhan, *Santarasa and Abhinavagupta's Philosophy of Aesthetics* (Poona, 1969), pp. 103-5.

<sup>2</sup> Whaling seems to accept the Western text-critical view that the core of the Sanskrit epic (books II-VI) was relatively free from this identification (Rāma as an explicit avatar of Viṣṇu)—although he does cite evidence for the avatar-concept from *kāṇḍa* VI (pp. 82-92). This reviewer finds the critical theory unconvincing; the central books are as replete with *bhakti* views as the others.

SPEIDEL, Michael P., *Mithras-Orion, Greek Hero and Roman Army God*, Études préliminaires aux Religions orientales dans l'Empire romain, tome 81 — Leiden, Brill, 1980, 56 p.

Voici enfin éclaircie l'éénigme du Mithra tauroctone, principale figuration des Mystères de Mithra. Mithra, dans l'Avesta, n'a pas cette fonction. Et ce rôle est tenu, dans le zoroastrisme des livres pahlavis, par le démon Ahriman. Quel rapport entre les deux mythes? Le présent petit livre — qui est un grand livre — répond, comme l'annonce son titre, que la tauroctonie de Mithra n'a rien d'iranien: elle résulte de la contamination, chez les inventeurs des mystères, du dieu iranien avec le héros grec Orion, lequel était, comme on sait, grand chasseur. Ainsi s'explique, pour la première fois de manière complète, la série d'animaux et d'objets figu-

rant sur les reliefs du tauroctone: ce sont les constellations *équatoriales* visibles dans le ciel d'hiver, à savoir: Taureau, Orion, (petit) Chien, Hydre, Cratère-Lion, (Epi de la) Vierge, Corbeau et Scorpion.

La découverte ici exposée a été en partie inspirée à l'a. par la communication, à laquelle il assistait, faite au Congrès de Téhéran, en 1976, par S. Insler. Cette communication, destinée d'abord aux Actes du Congrès, a paru dans les Hommages à M. J. Vermaseren, EPROER, 1980. Mais, comme le remarque Speidel, Insler a retiré, de son texte imprimé, l'identification qu'il avait faite oralement.

P. 11, je ne vois pas que, dans le ciel actuel — compte tenu de la précession des équinoxes depuis 2000 ans — le Petit Chien soit à exclure de la liste des constellations équatoriales. C'est contraire à ce que montre la figure 3.

P. 10, lire star  $\nu$  Leonis.

De cette identification de Mithra avec Orion, l'auteur conclut fort bien que le mithraïsme est une religion grecque et romaine et non orientale. Il faudrait peut-être préciser: et non iranienne. Car il ne me semble nullement exclu que la contamination se soit faite là où l'on a quelque raison de situer l'origine des mystères romains: en Asie Mineure, terre hellénisée, sans doute, mais tout de même orientale. "Quelque raison", dis-je, et je pense bien entendu au témoignage de Plutarque sur les *τελεταὶ* de Cilicie et les marins de Sylla, mais aussi au Mithra de Commagène, sur lequel je me permets de renvoyer à ma communication au Congrès de Téhéran, parue dans *Acta Iranica* 17, 1978, p. 187 sq., et dont une version remaniée, en allemand, doit être publiée dans la revue *Xenia* (Université de Constance).

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JACQUES DUCHESNE-GUILLEMIN

LOUTH, Andrew, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: from Plato to Denys* — Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1981, xvii + 215 pp. £12.50.

Disons le d'emblée, l'étude sérieuse qu'Andrew Louth vient de consacrer aux premiers développements de la mystique chrétienne à l'époque patristique vient combler un *desideratum* de longue date. Malgré de nombreuses et solides monographies sur différents auteurs ou courants, nous ne possédons pas encore, pour la mystique chrétienne, une claire présentation d'ensemble de haute tenue intellectuelle, similaire, par exemple, à l'ouvrage classique du regretté Gershom Scholem sur *Les Grands Courants de la Mystique Juive*, ou encore aux *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* d'Annemarie Schimmel.

Au moins pour la période formatrice — dont les différents courants mystiques du Christianisme médiéval, à Byzance comme à l'Ouest, sont les héritiers — Louth nous offre une introduction lucide et fort bien documentée. De plus, l'ouvrage abonde en citations choisies avec attention des différents auteurs analysés, qui en rendent la lecture plus attrayante.

Les difficultés notoires que rencontre toute analyse d'écrits mystiques — et qui contraste avec le paradoxe des fleuves d'encre versés par mystiques de tout bord pour décrire l'inneffable — tient, avant tout, aux différentes définitions qu'on peut légitimement donner du phénomène mystique. Union (avant la mort) de l'âme à Dieu, vision de Dieu (spirituelle ou physique), intuition de l'unité cosmique dans laquelle la personnalité se dissout (mais sans reconnaissance d'un principe divin autre que panthéiste), théosophie (où n'entre pratiquement pas d'élément subjectif), ou même effort moral et religieux *vers* un Dieu essentiellement transcendant (attitude à laquelle la tradition chrétienne se réfère en parlant de "spiritualité" ou d'*imitatio Christi*): ces diverses formes de virtuosité religieuse sont attestées dans de nombreuses cultures et traditions, et toute discussion du phénomène mystique court le double risque d'inclure trop dans son cadre — ou d'en exclure trop.

Ce double risque, Louth a su l'éviter. Suivant consciemment la thèse développée par R. C. Zaehner dans *Mysticism — Sacred and Profane*, il se refuse à réduire les différents phénomènes mystiques à une seule expérience fondamentale. Il peut ainsi montrer comment les structures fondamentales de la mystique chrétienne sont essentiellement différentes de celles de ses sources platoniciennes. Louth note, d'une part, que le mystique chrétien ne se contente pas d'une connaissance objective de Dieu, mais recherche une expérience immédiate de sa présence, et, d'autre part, que cette expérience ne se limite pas à l'*union* avec Dieu, qui n'en est que l'idéal asymptotique: c'est la *recherche du contact immédiat* avec Dieu qui est au cœur de cette mystique. Cette approche lui permet d'inclure dans sa discussion des auteurs, ou des courants, qui ne conçoivent pas de possibilité d'*unio mystica*, sans pour autant y intégrer toute la spiritualité de la période étudiée (un défaut marquant, par exemple, de Hilda Graef, *A History of Mysticism* une introduction, malgré son titre, à la spiritualité chrétienne).

Louth ne consacre en fait que cinq des dix chapitres de l'ouvrage à la présentation des différents auteurs ou courants mystiques de l'époque patristique. Il analyse ainsi successivement Origène, Athanasius et Grégoire de Nysse, Evagre, les Homélies du Pseudo Macaire, Diadoque de Photicié, Augustin et le Pseudo-Denys. On peut se demander pourquoi Louth choisit de consacrer un chapitre de son livre à Jean de la Croix. S'il

s'était agi de retracer rapidement les grandes lignes d'influence des thèmes centraux de la mystique patristique, on se serait attendu à la mention d'autres figures, aux côtés du Docteur Mystique. Par contre, il me semble qu'un chapitre sur Clément d'Alexandrie et les origines du platonisme chrétien à Alexandrie aurait été à sa place. L'idéal d'*apatheia* que décrivent les *Stromateis*, en effet, est fondamental pour l'histoire de la mystique chrétienne: qu'on songe, par exemple, à l'hésychasme byzantin ou à la redécouverte du *vrai gnostique* par Fénelon et dans les milieux quiétistes, à l'époque du Jansénisme!

C'est autour du platonisme et de son influence capitale sur les grands concepts de la mystique chrétienne ancienne que pivote le livre. Ainsi les trois premiers chapitres sont-ils consacrés à Platon, à Philon et à Plotin. Chez le premier, Louth analyse en particulier l'idée de *syngeneia* de l'âme avec le monde des Idées, qui permet seule l'acte de contemplation, la *theoria*. (L'auteur semble ne pas connaître l'ouvrage du Père E. des Places, *Syngeneia, la parenté de l'homme avec lieu d'Homère à la Patristique* [Paris, 1964].

Chez Philon, par contre, qui intègre le platonisme dans les cadres de la pensée monothéiste, c'est le désir de connaître un Dieu inconnaisable, parce que transcendant, qui indique la dimension mystique.

La thèse centrale de Louth — car le livre se veut plus qu'une présentation diachronique, il s'efforce de faire ressortir les principales lignes de force de la mystique paléo-chrétienne — c'est que l'idée de création *ex nihilo*, ou plutôt la reconnaissance progressive, par les Pères, de l'irréductibilité de cette idée, oblige la pensée chrétienne, dans une sorte de progressive *Entzauberung*, à prendre ses distances vis-à-vis du Platonisme. Il insiste à juste titre sur les conséquences de l'idée de création *ex nihilo* pour la pensée mystique: si toute la création est fondamentalement distincte du Créateur, point de *syngeneia* entre l'âme et Dieu; *homo imago dei*, certes; mais la ressemblance idéale entre la créature et son Créateur ne peut annuler la dualité ontologique irrémédiable: l'âme a beau être un miroir dans lequel se reflète l'image du Père, comme dans la métaphore fameuse d'Athanase (*Contra Gentes* 8), et la connaissance de soi une voie de connaître Dieu, la relation de *nature* entre l'âme et le divin, telle que la concevait le Platonisme, ne peut plus se retrouver dans la pensée patristique.

J'ai mentionné Athanase, parce que sa pensée exemplifie, pour l'auteur, la crise de la pensée mystique chrétienne. Suivant en cela un important article de F. Ricken ("Nikaia als Krisis des altchristlichen Platonismus", *Theologie und Philosophie* 44 [1969], 321-41), Louth voit la reconnaissance de la radicalité de la *creatio ex nihilo* s'affirmer de façon claire seulement avec Nicée.

On peut douter de cette vue des choses: un Tertullien ou même un Origène n'affirmaient-ils pas déjà cette doctrine sans ambiguïté aucune — le premier consacrant même un ouvrage entier à réfuter les thèses d'Hermogène sur l'éternité de la matière (voir, par exemple, Tertullien, *Apologeticus* 17; *de praescriptione haereticorum* 13.2; Origène, *De Principiis*, II.1.4; *Comm. in Genesin, apud* Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* VIII.20)?

D'autre part, on voit mal en quoi Nicée serait un pivot à ce sujet, puisque Arius admet la *creatio ex nihilo* tout autant qu'Athanase, comme le reconnaît Louth lui-même (p. 75). A ce sujet, il est certes probable que des conceptions sotériologiques aussi différentes que celles d'Arius et d'Athanase ne sont pas sans influencer les conceptions de la mystique qui peuvent émerger au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle, mais Louth ne les élucide pas complètement. Peut-être la nouvelle approche de R. C. Gregg et D. E. Groh (*Early Arianism—a View of Salvation* [Philadelphia, 1981]) qui oppose l'idée de progrès moral chez Arius à la grâce accordée à l'homme par le Fils, divin par nature, sur laquelle insiste l'orthodoxie nicéenne, pourra-t-elle aussi éclairer les choses d'un jour nouveau.

Quoi qu'il en soit, la brisure fondamentale de l'ontologie monothéiste, si elle ne supprime pas nécessairement la déification (*theiosis*) comme but ultime de la vie mystique, la rend en tout cas asymptotique. Ainsi, pour Grégoire de Nysse, la vie mystique ne s'achève plus, comme dans le platonisme, par la *theoria*, mais est caractérisée par la tension incessante, dans l'âme purifiée, vers un Dieu à jamais transcendant: c'est l'*epektasis*, analysée naguère par le Cardinal Daniélou. Face à la mystique de la lumière annoncée par Origène, Louth oppose ainsi la mystique de la ténèbre développée pour la première fois par Grégoire, et qui était promise à un si riche avenir.

Il est impossible d'entrer ici dans les fines analyses accordées à chacun des auteurs traités. Bornons-nous à relever, avec l'auteur, l'importance de "la contribution monastique", représentée ici par Evagre, le Pseudo-Macaire et Diadoque de Photcé. Regrettions seulement, à ce sujet, qu'aucune attention ne soit accordée aux écrivains syriaques: du *Liber Granduum* à Isaac de Ninive, la longue chaîne des mystiques de l'Orient syrien devrait avoir une place de choix dans tout ouvrage d'ensemble.

Au sujet du courant représenté par les *Homélies Spirituelles* de Syméon de Mésopotamie (le Pseudo-Macaire) enfin, on peut se demander si l'auteur n'aurait pas dû insister davantage sur cette tradition mystique essentiellement non-platonicienne, mais pourtant (ou pour cela même, comme le voulait le R. P. Festugière) profondément chrétienne, et que G. Quispel appelle, l'opposant à la *Seinsmystik*, la *Gestaltmystik* (voir sa contribution aux *Studies in Mysticism and Religion presented to Gershom G. Scholem*, Jerusa-

lem, 1967, pp. 191-195, où il souligne certaines relations possibles avec les premières strates de la mystique juive).

Ces quelques remarques n'enlèvent rien aux qualités d'un livre qui met enfin à la portée d'un public plus large que les cercles de spécialistes les grandes lignes de la première mystique chrétienne. Ce sera la tâche des recherches futures de préciser l'image, déjà très belle, que Louth vient de nous en donner.

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## CHRONICLE AND CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Summer and autumn are, among other things, conference time. Many more congresses, symposia and colloquia of more or less immediate interest to students of religion have taken place in recent months than can be recorded here. Of some of them advance notice has been given in the CALENDAR section of previous issues of *NUMEN*. Great Britain saw not only the annual meeting of our member group, the BAHR, but also hosted the conference of the IABS (International Assoc. of Buddhist Studies). The Annual Meeting of the DVRG (Deutsche Vereinigung für Religionsgeschichte) took place in Tübingen during 4-8 October under the intriguing and exciting title *Dämonen und Gegengötter*. Demons of all kinds, snake-gods, devils, the various types of Iranian, gnostic and other dualisms, evil and destructive gods etc. all had a field day in Tübingen. The Japanese member group which celebrated its 50th Jubilee in 1980 (see *NUMEN* XXVIII, 1981, 111) met in Fukuoka, Kyushu, from October 1-3. The number of participants had to be counted by the hundreds, and the meeting split into 8 sections and 4 symposia. One of the symposia also testified to the revived interest in Jaina studies. Buddhological interests no longer seem to hold a monopoly.

Conferences often overlap, plunging eager conference-goers into severe dilemmas. At the same time that the Japanese member-group met in Kyushu, a symposium on "Shamanism in the South" (India, S-E Asia, Korea, China, South Pacific) was held near Osaka. Whether the professed aim of arriving at a more satisfactory typological grasp and a more valid definition of a phenomenon and a term that have been, and are, "somewhat vaguely and loosely used" has actually been achieved, is open to doubt. But certainly much interesting material has been presented.

The Rome Seminar on "Universalistic Aspect of Religion in the Achaemenian Age", planned to co-incide with the Raffaele Pettazzoni centenary, will take place not in February 1983 (as erroneous-

ly announced in *NUMEN* XXIX, 1982, 159) but on 6-8 April, 1983.

From 24-26 May, 1983, the Religionswissenschaftliche Seminar of the University of Bonn will hold a conference, co-sponsored by the IAHR, on "Religious Syncretism in Central Asia". Specialists in the field wishing to attend (as distinct from presenting papers: the list of speakers is already closed) should communicate directly with the Warden of the meeting place (Arnold-Janssen-Haus, Arnold-Janssen Strasse 24, D-5205 Sankt Augustin 1, BRD).

RJZW